



PUBLIC FORUM DEBATE

**JANUARY 2020 ADVANCED
PUBLIC FORUM BRIEF**



Resolved: The United States should end its economic sanctions against Venezuela.

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Introduction

The January 2020 pf topic is the US sanction policy and Venezuela.

General history

“Money speaks” is more than a euphemism for the rich garnering attention in politics, but also a ploy for how one can institute change in the international politics. For as long as nations have had trade and interstate commerce, the idea of using economic pressure to foster a behavior change in an adversarial nation has been used. In modern times, the oldest such measure dates back to 1804. As the newly formed United States government sought to gain access to the markets of Europe for their cotton and wool goods, they imposed a list of import taxes on France until France agreed to fair trade in Europe. During the French War of Independence, the US sought to aid our French allies by putting huge import taxes and trade restrictions on England in hopes of crippling their economy. Over the course of the next one hundred years, the US would use economics to influence policy and gain leverage over nations like China during the Boxer Rebellion, the Spanish colonies in Central America during the Mexican American War, and Japan during the pre WWII buildup (which also was a major complaint and reason for the Japanese entrance into WWII on the side of the Axis powers in the first place.)

In recent times, economic sanctions have been used as a form of weapon, much like we would use a bomb or a bullet. The purpose and guiding principal behind such action is that regime change requires instability. Besides launching a full-scale military operation to destabilize the nation, one might be able to do such a thing with economics. Starting in the era post Korean War, economics were used to isolate the Soviet Union from acquiring new allies across the world. Under threat of trade embargos and the severing of trade ties, nations were pushed into supporting the United States and its allies. Direct trade embargos on agriculture materials and modern electronics hindered the USSR’s development as their industry was ill equipped to develop these goods on their own. In the 1880’s and with the rise of radical dictatorships in Central and South America and the Middle East, economic sanctions were used as a means to promote regime change. In many cases, the sanctions failed to do so and covert actions were necessary to oust the dictators that become entrenched by anti-American sentiment over the sanctions and their impact on the general people. After the 1979 Iranian Revolution, sanctions were imposed on Iran’s new government to little success outside of giving the radical leaders of Iran a contestant talking point. In Iraq under Saddam Husain, sanctions were used to attempt to not only force his hand on human rights issues but to limit his access to materials necessary to build a nuclear reactor. While he grew rich due to black market oil sales, his schools went without basic supplies like pencils due to the embargo. Sanctions in North Korea were

implemented in the mid 2000's to curb their nuclear ambitions but as of today, North Korea is a nuclear state with a developing missile program.

Have there been success stories? The complicated short answer is yes. In South Africa, the change from an apartheid system to a democratic elections system was likely pressured by international economic sanctions. The threat of economic sanctions have likely motivated countries like Mexico and Columbia into taking a more hardline stance on the drug trade, and economic sanctions on traded goods likely helped speed up the economic depression that lead to the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in the 1980's

Topic History

The United States has had its eye on Venezuela for almost two decades. Outside of Columbia, Venezuela is one of the world's biggest exporters of illegal narcotics to the West. In 2006, the United States first implemented its first set of economic sanctions on the nation seeking to limit their oil and gas industry until a time when the nation cracked down on the illegal drug trade, created an anti-terrorism task force to combat the radical Islamic extremists that had taken up refuge in the jungles, and cracked down on human trafficking. In 2008, Executive Order 13224 gave the Department of the Treasury the power under the Narcotics Kingpin Act to sanctions target and sanction citizens of Venezuela for acts of terrorism and drug trafficking. Under this act, 18 government leaders and prominent citizens have had their Visas frozen and their bank accounts locked. In this same year, three more government officials were sanctioned for promoting the rebellion in neighboring Columbia by supporting and supplying money and supplies to the revolution known as FARC. Then President Hugo Chavez was one of the sanctioned individuals. In 2011, four more military officials in the Chavez government were sanctioned after evidence emerged that they too had been smuggling weapons to the rebels.

In 2014, President Obama signed the Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act which authorized the Department of the Treasury to freeze the bank accounts of any government official that interfered with the right of speech, the right to assemble, or was caught participating in human trafficking. Dozens of officials have been netted by this act, but as of today, it is set to expire on December 31, 2019.

In 2015. President Obama signed Executive Order 13692 which authorized travel bans for human rights violations and expanded the definition of human rights violations to include interference in protests and fostering an open discussion about corruption in the government.

Under President Donald Trump, Venezuela has been labeled as part of a "triangle of terror" along with Cuba and Nicaragua because of their socialist governments and support for rouge

nations. Under the Trump administration, further sanctions were implemented at direct changes to the government including fair and free elections and a pledge that the constitution would be rewritten to exclude any socialist policies. In 2017, shortly after taking office, President Trump authorized sanctions against nations supplying food and basic supplies to the nation while cutting the humanitarian aid that the US was sending via charitable organizations. EO 13850 in 2017 banned the import of oil and gas from Venezuela. EO 13808 and EO 13827 both limit the use of US banking systems by the government and officials of Venezuela as well as forbids US companies from using Venezuela digital currency.

Trump has meanwhile also limited their access to the international market via secret executive orders. Orders issued in 2017 and 2018 limit the importing of gold from Venezuela, forbids the purchase of agricultural goods from them, and prevents companies like Microsoft and Adobe from allowing the nation to access the cloud storage facilities.

In 2018, Nicolás Maduro won a narrow reelection bid to serve another term as president. His opponents alleged fraud, vote rigging, vote buying, and outright vote stuffing in many locations. As the country, fueled by a year of starvation and lacking at times basic necessities began to rise up, pressure was put on the US and other nations to ramp up their economic sanctions or intervene with a military action. The goal was that either way, the nation would be easy to destabilize and thus it would be easy to foster a regime change. The US chose to moderately ramp up their sanctions. This however came too little too late as the people never were able to mount an effective protest campaign., the military never swayed their loyalty, and in 2018, Maduro was sworn in for another term.

As of 2019, the nation of Venezuela has not seen the government change that other that hoped for. Their economy has bent but not broken. In a speech before the general assembly after his inauguration last year, their president claimed that this shows the strength and resolve of a socialist nation in the face of foreign oppressors. Reports from international aid agencies and the UN show that as of 2019, the only people that seem to be affected by the sanctions are the citizens themselves. In many parts of the country, the people face shortages of food, medical supplies, and basic goods like toilet paper. Economic sanctions on exported goods like grain and oil and mined goods like gold mean that workers have a hard time finding markets for their products. But with the resolve of the world behind the sanction machine, we are at a point where neither side seems willing to back down, and it is only a matter of time before something gives.

List of individuals sanctioned by the US (not comprehensive)

Tibisay Lucena, election chair

Tareck El Aissami, Vice President of Economy and Minister for National Industry and Production

Samark Lopez Bello

Freddy Bernal

Elías Jaua, Presidential Commission for the ANC and Minister of Education;

Tibisay Lucena, President of the Maduro-controlled National Electoral Council (CNE)

Néstor Reverol, Minister of Interior and former Commander General of Venezuelan National Guard Tarek

William Saab, Ombudsman and President of Moral Council

Iris Varela, ANC member and Prisons Minister.[30]

Venezuelan Vice President Delcy Rodríguez

Diosdado Cabello, President of the ANC

Marleny Contreras Hernández de Cabello, Tourism Minister

Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino López

Vice President Delcy Rodríguez

Tarek Saab, Ombudsman

President Hugo Chavez

President Nicholas Maduro

List of businesses sanctioned (not comprehensive)

Russian bank Evrofinance Mosnarbank

Minerven, Venezuela's state-run mining company

Central Bank of Venezuela

Framework and Definitions

When I look at this resolution, the first thing that jumps out is the word “ought.”: in LD circles, this word denotes a moral obligation or a moral call to action. In a public forum debate, I think that the debate is less or a moral debate and more focused on the concept over whether we are obligated in the first place to maintain our existing set of sanctions on Venezuela or not. However, this is a given with most public forum resolutions. The skilled debater will go a step further and use this as a weighing mechanism at the end of the round.

The way that I have always viewed frameworks is that they are a lens that tell the judge how to prioritize impacts. If you are running a human rights impact with lives saved your opponent is running an economic impact with billions earned, a good framework will tell the judge why I should evaluate lives before profits. In this way, a cost benefit doesn’t really meet this criterion of prioritization. I would still be stuck with the same lives vs money debate and in the end, I’d have to default to making up my own mind, and as we discussed in the September/October brief, you never want the judge making up their own mind. So, in this debate, I view the cost benefit that the resolution hits us in the head with as a secondary framework. What I mean by this is that in the end, the judge will weight impacts for costs and benefits, but the primary framework that you and your opponent should be advocating for will tell the judge how to prioritize the impacts.

With, let’s look at the potential frameworks. Each framework will depend on the narrative that you are going be running. In this resolution more than any other this year, it is important to make sure that the consistency in your contentions is solid and tows a similar line to one another, and that the framework follows suit.

If you are running heavy on economic contentions leading to success of regime change or the collapse of the government, then you could run that whichever team best gets to regime change first wins. The biggest issue that you will need to outweigh on this front is that the economic harms and hardships created by the sanctions on the people of the country and in the region as they adapt to a changing economic reality might be too great and you might just get swamped trying to weight the changing Maduro government with civilian deaths and mass migration.

If you are running heavy on the human rights impacts, then you can argue that the side that best prevents or shows impacts to the citizens of a country should win. Judges would be far more likely to vote off of damages and lives that have the potential to kill civilians that have done nothing wrong. Human rights has several impact scenarios that can be run which will be covered below in the body of this brief, but just know that like all human rights issues, you will likely need some concrete numbers to weight in the round as most judges have been trained and conditioned to weight numbers and in a numbers vs lives game, very few judges know how to run the internal moral calculations and will default to what they know.

If you are running cases that are based on international relations, it would be applicable to run a framework that is based off of the idea of promoting positive international relations. International relations could take many flavors based on your independent style and preferences. First, you will need to pick the region or country that you feel stands the most to gain or lose in the sanction's regime. Second, chose your impact scenario. If you chose to go economics, you will need the link evidence that talks about the decline in trade being a disadvantage to them or how increasing trade with other nations to fill the gap will lead to negative consequences for others. If you chose to go sphere of influence, you will need to find the link and impact evidence that talks about how infringing on the US's influence or an expanding country X influence will trigger conflict or miscalculations. Most importantly, you will need a solid impact that gives the judge a realistic impact to vote on. Remember that judges dislike voting on hypotheticals and instead want arguments grounded in real world implications and likelihoods.

On a larger scale, either side could run a realist framework. Realism is the concept that we don't live in a perfect world. We have friends, but our friends can be our enemies. We also have to live with the concept that each nation is looking for self-preservation and survival as a primary motive for action. No nation wants to "go quietly into the night" nor will any nation just sit back while others take advantage for them and their ignorance of the situation. In this case, it is in the best interests of nations to "prepare for the worst and hope for the best." It's the same reason that some people keep an extra winter coat in the car or why people fishing in Alaska carry a handgun; you hope you never break down in a winter storm and you hope that you don't run into a hungry brown bear, but you know that the world is a scary place with real dangers.

Angelo M. Codevilla., 3-29-2018, "Do Economic Sanctions Work?," Hoover Institution, <https://www.hoover.org/research/do-economic-sanctions-work>

The U.S. uses sanctions to try forcing changes in the policies of countries with which it is at peace—often changes that loom large to the target's regime—by inflicting relatively small burdens on its economy. In short, it uses sanctions to pursue foreign policy objectives on the cheap. The results, however, have illustrated that cheap sanctions are not serious, and serious economic warfare is anything but cheap.

Because the target regime's "center of gravity" is usually the part most insulated from the sanctions' effect, and because economic resources are inherently fungible, economic strictures are a blunt, indiscriminate tool of policy—better fit to destroy a target than to influence it. The major instances of U. S employment of economic sanctions—Iran 1979-2015, Iraq 1990-2003, and North Korea 1994-present—illustrate the insurmountable problems of sanctions as tools of influence.

This card is a pro card on the topic. However, there is are ways to run this argument on the pro. A pro team will need to establish the harms that the current government of Venezuela has had on the people and the international community at large. They would then need to establish that no nation in their right mind would leave this emerging threat to grown. Instead of military action, sanctions are a middle ground option between war and nothing.

When we look at the definition debate, we find a few key points that teams must keep in mind when debating.

First, “its” denotes ownership. The noun that has ownership is the United States, so we are talking about action done by the United States. This is important as many other nations have sanctions against Venezuela. In some cases, their sanctions mimic the United States’ sanctions or are even more extreme. It is important when debating to make sure that both your evidence and your opponents’ evidence is specific to the United States and not to sanctions in general or other nation’s sanctions.

Second, and the biggest point of contention is that of “economic sanctions.” According to Lin, Tom C. W. in “Financial Weapons of War”.

First, in terms of economic sanctions, nation-states have long used such policy tools as part of warfare and conflict, and they have become more prevalent in recent years.¹²⁸ Economic sanctions are designed and intended to cause financial damage and distress to an enemy in a hot war or a cold war. Economic sanctions can be targeted against nation-states or specific individuals and institutions.

In short, anything that causes financial damage and is levied nation to nation is an economic sanction.

On a more legal scope, according to the United States federal government, an economic sanction is defined as

Economic Sanctions means those laws, executive orders, enabling legislation or regulations administered and enforced by the United States pursuant to which economic sanctions have been imposed on any Person, entity, organization, country or regime, including the Trading with the Enemy Act, the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, the Iran Sanctions Act, the Sudan Accountability and Divestment Act and any other OFAC Sanctions Program.

The biggest difference between these definitions is the use of a deterrent in a conflict. This point is nuanced but important. The main difference comes in sequencing. In an economic sanction under definition two, the act is designed to stop an action while under the first, the act can intercept and be of a reactionary method. The embargo of 1962 that was placed around Cuba would be an example of this. If it were truly an economic sanction, we would have cut off trade with the USSR for their transfer of nuclear warheads rather than attempting to use force to deter them. To this extent, is everything we have currently against Venezuela an economic sanction? Is it still an economic sanction if we intercept goods head for Venezuela, have we crossed the line from sanction to embargo and from one definition to another?

Furthermore, the definition as provided by the United States federal government provides for several statutes that must be used to grant authorization to sanctions. So, the questions is that many government agencies forbid dealing with nations or people but are they doing so under an official capacity or a legal one?

Unlike the November/December topic, there are not as many tricks that the resolution lends themselves to. This topic is straight forward and by the book as long as you have sorted out the definition of “economic sanctions” and that your evidence is based on the United States.

Civilians

As a tool of war, economic sanctions have been seen as a “best of both world’s” approach to foreign diplomacy. The destructiveness of a bombing raid on a government facility or industry while not putting at risk any US assets and with the added ability to filter the targets for a clean and orderly economic strike. On paper, this approach works to a tee. But like many of the Dungeons and Dragons campaigns, just because it has been put on paper does not mean that it will play out that way in the real world when you get multiple actors at the table.

The first concept that we need to unpack is that the economy of a nation is not compartmentalized into segments that are devoid of interactions with each other. In this regard, industry and effects that benefit the government will also have a dramatic impact on the people that work them. Take for instance the sanctioning of North Korean food supplies. These sanctions were put into place to limit the ability of the North Korean government to feed their army, thus reducing moral and breaking their will to fight should that time come. However, the food that was being imported was not ordered or invoiced as “One crate of military food” or “for Kim’s army only.” The food supplies were ordered either the expressed idea that they would be for the people in some way or that part of the reserves would be given to the people. Thus, by limiting the food supplies, we inadvertently cut supplies to the North Korean people. Even in a situation where the people received a small fraction of the food that was being sent, maybe 10%, reducing the overall amount thus magnified the problem for the civilians. In Venezuela, the situation is much the same. When the United States government sought to limit the supplies going to the government or government agencies, they limited all supplies of that nature, whether that be toiletries, food, or clothing. In doing so, they limited access by the civilians to gain access to already needed and limited supplies.

When industry is targeted, it can have the same effect. Whether the nation has a state run industrial economy or a capitalist economy, the government has a vested interest and directly benefits from production. In Venezuela, the government operates a state run oil and mining industry. Employees of these oil rigs and mines are citizens of the nation and receive pay from the government. When the United States government implemented sanctions limiting the import and export of oil and cutting the gold and coal exports, thousands of people were put out of work as mines and oil rigs shut down. State sponsored industry found ways to survive via smugglings and other illegal means but large scale production meant that for many of the workers that were already feeling the effects of sky high inflation and product shortages, their situation has become dire.

Even worsts still is when the sanctions are targeted at the civilians. As stated above, sanctions are seen as a weapon of war. Generally, weapons of war can only be targeted at enemy combatants as per treaties under the UN and Geneva Convention. However, since economic sanctions exist as a tool of war but are classified as a diplomatic instrument, their use

on civilians is legal. In many causes, sanctions have explicitly been targeted at civilians for the expressed purpose of p of national disruption. As a point of visualization, imagine that you live in a nation where you can't get access to food, clothing, diapers, cleaning products, gas, medicine, or even toilet paper. This is the reality in Venezuela. Years ago during the early days of the United States, we realized that the best way to cause a government to enter a state of fear was to put their citizens on edge. By purposely targeting civilians with measures that make their lives unformattable to live, foreign powers can claim ignorance and say that it is the policies of the home nation that are at fault and they are to blame. The hope is that the people will eventually reach a tipping point and cause enough instability to force change in the government. However, the question must be asked whether these actions, that may very well cause harm to civilians and even death, are justified. If a bombing run were to destroy an apartment complex, killing 40 to get at one government official, there might be complaints from the general populace of the United States. But as an act of war, sanctions are rarely seen and the same story that it is "x country's fault" rather than US action tends to overwrite the existing truth narrative.

Finally, we get the unintended consequences of what is sanctioned and how that changes the course of existence in the sanctioned nation. Good and services can be repurposed and used for illicit means. To combat the threat from this, the US has limited access to nations and their ability to get or sell legitimate goods in blanket bans. Take for instance graphite. A type of carbon, graphite is good at absorbing excess radioactive particles. Made into huge rods, these can be inserted into nuclear reactors to slow or stop nuclear reactions and thus allow for control of energy production and greatly reducing the threat that a nuclear reactor goes critical. The biggest source of graphic on the commercial market is that of pencil lead. In the 1990's when Saddam was looking to build a nuclear reactor, the US sanctioned Iraq and banned the importation of pencils because his scientists could then have a supply of graphite for their reactor programs. This side effect meant that school children didn't have pencils for their classrooms. A whole generation of school children have never seen a pencil until the mid-2000's. Laughable you might find this, take something bigger like chlorine. This simple chemical is used to clean water and sanitize hospitals and other areas. It is a basic necessity for modern society. However, it can also be turned into a toxic gas that is classified as a weapon of mass destruction. This too was limited by the United States. Studies done by the UN in the early 2000's showed that thousands of children died from water-based illnesses because of a clack of chlorinated water.

When debating this topic, the concept of counting lives will become important. Narratives about people waiting in line at the Columbian border for days for supplies to be brought in will have an emotional connection with some judges, but most judges on this topic will want to have a concrete basis for counting and weighing the contention. The idea of lives won't be that hard to find as, sadly, the number of lives lost is starting to be reported and the numbers are staggering. A further impact that you might want to consider running is the number of people killed in protests. If the purpose of sanctions is to get the people to rebel,

then it stands to reason that the number of people killed while rebelling must also be accounted for. On the con, you are stuck defending the “sanctions work” debate. Disproving that sanctions have no effect on the general public or that the impacts don’t happen will likely be a bold-faced lie at this point. What you are going to need to do is to argue that the lives saved by government policy change due to sanctions is worth the cost and that lives saved is more than lives lost.

Sample Evidence

Sanctions are heavy handed, and this has a dramatic impact on the people

Rodríguez, Francisco. 12-4-2019, "Opinion," Washington Post, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/12/04/us-oil-sanctions-are-hurting-venezuelans-time-new-approach-pressure-maduro/>

Venezuela is living through the deepest economic and humanitarian crisis in our hemisphere in more than a century. This catastrophe was triggered by the mismanagement and corruption of Venezuelan dictator Nicolás Maduro and his predecessor, Hugo Chávez. Yet it is now increasingly clear that U.S. economic sanctions are also aggravating it.

Since 2017, the Trump administration has progressively imposed an oil and financial embargo that has strongly curtailed the economy's access to hard currency. After the latest round of oil sanctions this January, oil production fell by 400,000 barrels per day, leading to \$8 billion in foregone export revenue. Imports have fallen by more than 50 percent from last year, according to my calculations based on trading-partner data, and now stand at less than one-tenth of their 2012 levels.

Sanctions seek to punish governments that violate the rights of their people and induce them to change their conduct. But they can also end up harming the people that they intend to protect. In Venezuela, the escalation of sanctions was part of a strategy of "maximum pressure" aimed at producing a break in the military's support of the regime. That break has not come about, and Venezuelans now get to live in the worst imaginable world: ruled by a dictatorship and living in a sanctioned economy.

The harsh conditions caused by the economic poverty of sanctions along with the brutal dictatorship have caused the deaths of innocent civilians

O'Toolestaff, Molly. 6-5-2019, "Venezuela, now a top source of U.S. asylum claims, poses a challenge for Trump," Los Angeles Times, <https://www.latimes.com/politics/la-na-pol-trump-venezuela-asylum-immigration-20190605-story.html>

Sen. Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.), who has pushed for granting temporary status to Venezuelans, said Trump's policy is counterproductive.

"Blocking Venezuelan refugees from seeking safe haven and forcing them to return home at this very dangerous time plays right into Maduro's hands," Durbin said.

The economic implosion of Venezuela, whose vast oil resources once helped make it South America's wealthiest country, is nearly unprecedented in modern history outside a war zone.

The world's highest inflation rate, scarcity of food and basic services, skyrocketing homicides, and corruption and persecution from Maduro's increasingly authoritarian regime have precipitated one of the largest and fastest mass migrations to hit the Western Hemisphere.

Trump has responded with crippling sanctions intended to force Maduro to step down and hand over power to Juan Guaido, the opposition leader whom the United States and many other Western Hemisphere nations recognize as interim president. American officials have threatened U.S. military intervention and called on the Venezuelan people to help overthrow Maduro's regime, though Guaido has failed to mobilize such a popular uprising.

"All of Venezuelans want the U.S. military to intervene in Venezuela," said Ortega, the asylum seeker in Tijuana. "We feel very grateful for everything Trump is doing."

But the sanctions, particularly on Venezuela's state oil company, where Ortega worked, also have exacerbated the country's collapse, experts say. The penalties have made it tougher for Venezuela to import food and medication, and are accelerating the exodus, said Adam Isacson, a defense expert at the Washington Office on Latin America.

Looking primarily at the rapidly declining oil sector, the Brookings Institution estimated that more than 5 million more Venezuelans could flee in the near future, rivaling the Syrian refugee crisis.

Oil sanctions against Venezuela have been on the table for many years, said Lisa Viscidi, an energy specialist at the Inter-American Dialogue, but officials considered them a "nuclear option" because of the likelihood they would worsen the humanitarian situation.

"That was a risk they were willing to take," Viscidi said of the Trump administration. "They were calculating that ultimately was the only way to get Maduro to fall."

Sanctions are harming the medical industry. People and doctors are being restricted by the supplies they can get and this means lives

Kurmanaev Anatoly. and Krauss, Clifford. 2-8-2019, "U.S. Sanctions Are Aimed at Venezuela's Oil. Its Citizens May Suffer First.,"NYT, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/08/world/americas/venezuela-sanctions-maduro.html>

The opposition plans to bring American-sponsored humanitarian aid — including medical kits and enough food to feed 5,000 Venezuelans for 10 days — into the country through the border with Colombia.

But it was stopped on Friday by the Maduro administration, which blocked the bridge the supply caravan had to cross.

By forcing a showdown at the border, where the Venezuelan authorities refused to let in essential supplies, opposition leaders hoped to put an uncomfortable spotlight on Mr. Maduro and the armed forces — the group whose support is vital to his remaining in power.

"This is plainly not a humanitarian mission," said Adam Isacson, director of defense oversight at the Washington Office on Latin America, of the opposition. "They want the visual optic. They want to force the Venezuelan military to make a decision — damned if you do, damned if you don't."

On Friday, Mr. Maduro said the aid was not needed.

"They want to draw a caricature of a country in a humanitarian crisis, a dictatorship, and the U.S. opening their hands to help a people in need," he said of the opposition. "The reality is that it is not any help, it is a message of humiliation to a people."

Carmen González, 64, and her husband, Bonifacio Cabezas, 71, rested on Wednesday after walking to a fourth pharmacy in a fruitless search for medication to treat Mr. Cabezas' prostate cancer.

Carmen González, 64, and her husband, Bonifacio Cabezas, 71, rested on Wednesday after walking to a fourth pharmacy in a fruitless search for medication to treat Mr. Cabezas' prostate cancer. Credit...Meridith Kohut for The New York Times

But in pharmacies across the Venezuelan capital, desperate patients searching for scarce medicine said they fear new sanctions could push the already collapsing health care system over the edge.

"If this gets worse this week because of the measures to pressure the government, I'm going to go crazy," said Juliana López, owner of a small pharmacy on the outskirts of the capital, as she turned away customer after customer. "We're already just barely surviving. To get worse we would have to be hit by a meteorite."

Because of the prevalence of the United States financial system and the dollar in the global economy, the ripple effects of the sanctions spread far beyond American borders, making it extremely difficult for the Venezuelan government to continue buying and selling goods.

The foundational statistic for the 40,000 dead is false

Bahar et al, 2019, Dany Bahar (Brookings Institution), Sebastian Bustos (Harvard Center for International Development), Jose R. Morales (Harvard Center for International Development), Impact of Miguel A. Santos (Harvard Center for International Development), Impact of the 2017 Sanctions on Venezuela: Revisiting the Evidence, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/impact-of-the-2017-sanctions-on-venezuela_final.pdf

WS claim that, given the 31 percent increase in general mortality recorded in Venezuela between 2017 and 2018 (according to their own sources), U.S. sanctions have been directly responsible for 40,000 deaths. We are unable to find that 31 percent statistic in publicly available sources to replicate the calculation. In their executive summary and in the body of the paper, the authors state that the estimate is based on figures reported in the 2018 National Survey on Living Conditions (ENCOVI for its Spanish acronym), a representative survey of Venezuela conducted by a group of local universities. However, at the time of publication of this paper and of Weisbrot and Sachs (2019), the 2018 ENCOVI survey results had not yet been released. Footnote 35 of Weisbrot and Sachs (2019) clarifies that, contrary to what is stated in the main body of the text, the mortality statistics are indeed based on a source different than ENCOVI: an internal report on Venezuela from March 2019 by the United Nations titled “Overview of Priority Humanitarian Needs,” which—to the best of our knowledge—is not publicly available.⁶ **In the absence of data to replicate the WS calculation, we compare the evolution of the infant mortality rate in Venezuela to that of Latin America drawing from the World Bank’s World Development Indicators. While different than overall mortality rates, increases in infant mortality rates are generally interpretable as a preventable consequence of inadequate pre- and post-natal care for otherwise healthy but vulnerable infants. Thus, infant mortality is often recognized as a good proxy measure of the quality of overall public health provision. Figure 8 plots infant mortality rates in the first year of life expressed per 1,000 live births across Latin America over time (indexed at 100 in 2012). It shows that between 2013 and 2016, infant mortality in Venezuela grew by 44 percent (from 15.4 to 22.2 deaths per 1,000 live births) at the same time as it declined elsewhere in the region. This result is consistent with that reported by Garcia, Correa, and Rousset (2019), which estimated an increase in infant mortality of 40 percent between 2008 and 2016. In line with our previous findings, the deterioration in infant mortality (and correlated increase in general mortality) precedes the imposition of sanctions in August 2017.**

Further Reading

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Refugees

Given the choice, people want to stay where they are. It is a fact of life. Even on the micro level, when you are at your house and it is morning, unless you have things that you need to do, you prefer to stay in one location that is comfortable and suits your situation. On a larger level, families tend to be the same, unless prompted by some external force, most families tend to be happy to stay where they are. When people do move locations, it is either because they found a better situation or because they are being forced to find a different situation that might not be better but might allow them to survive. In the case of Venezuela, the choice tends to be the latter. As we stated above, sanctions have put extrema pressure on the civilian population. Facing shortfalls of basic goods and with the Maduro government becoming more violent by the day as they attempt to quell unrest, many people have taken to the basic idea that “anywhere but here” and have left their homes. For many, the time is right. Many were already facing dilatated housing conditions, gang crime, and poverty due to years of government neglect, and with little to tie them to their homes, large streams of migrants began to spill over the border between Venezuela and their neighboring countries.



<https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/09/03/venezuelan-exodus/need-regional-response-unprecedented-migration-crisis>

As the map above illustrates, the flood of refugees leaving Venezuela has reached epic proportions with almost 5 million citizens having left thus far. The majority are settling in neighboring Colombia and Argentina, but some are finding their way to the Caribbean islands, likely as guests of

relatives, and farther north. For anyone that has watched a Trump Rally during the 2018 election, the focus of his efforts were to talk about the migrant trains that were leaving and heading north. Although he was not wrong that these trains were moving north, we need to take this with a grain of salt. First, the trains were losing people as they moved through Central America into Mexico as people found suitable places to settle. Second, these trains were not a routine thing that has been happening for years but were the direct result of United States policy action caused by our economic sanctions on Venezuela.

The impact to this that we create a chain reaction refugee crisis that has human and economic impacts. The human impact is the displacement of 5 million people who have to find new homes, jobs, and housing in foreign lands. Many of these nations, the United States included, is ill equipped to handle the influx of refugees along their borders both in terms of resettlement and in terms of financial support. In term of financial support, I am not referring to the GOP lead talking point on welfare, but rather humanitarian support like medical assistance, food, and shelter while suitable housing can be found. For nations the United States, we might be able to bear the brunt of this should congress act, but for many Central and South American nations, the who might have poor economic system to being with, have suffered government change recently, or have also had refugee issues in the past, their financial systems are at the brink and are being pushed further into the red by the influx of more people. In some cases, nations have closed their borders and in others, the refugees are being shuttled to live in camps where basic necessities are few and living conditions are worse than the land they were fleeing.

To debate this, you will need to argue that the crisis has been started by United States sanctions and that there is a domino effect to other South American nations. You might be able to find some literature on how this impacts the United States, but the best literature is going to be on the impact to South and Central American economies. You will want to argue that a collapse in Central and South America will cause more refugees from other nations to flee and this will put a strain on the hemisphere as a whole. This equates to lives lost, deaths, and human suffering. If you get a judge that you know leans to the right, you can even argue that to solve the refugee crisis, there needs to be a vote in the pro. When debating the con, you will need to minimize the harms. First off, you will need to argue that the sanctions are not a US exclusive issue and that other nations need to limit theirs as well or we will never see any sort of solvency. Second, you will need to argue a root cause. If you can prove that the Maduro government is the real issue and that sanctions are not the cause, then you can show that at worst, no change is not hurting people and at best, pressure must be kept up. This will all come down to how well teams weight the impacts and phrase the solvency mechanism of sanctions.

Sample Evidence

Sanctions exacerbate the refugee situation along the southern border. As people flee the economic conditions in Venezuela, they move north. They have now overtaken China as the number one asylum seekers

O'Toolestaff, Molly. 6-5-2019, "Venezuela, now a top source of U.S. asylum claims, poses a challenge for Trump," Los Angeles Times, <https://www.latimes.com/politics/la-na-pol-trump-venezuela-asylum-immigration-20190605-story.html>

Lionel Ortega had worked as an engineer for nearly 40 years for the Venezuelan state oil company when he walked off the job last October, defying authorities who demanded he stay and oversee repairs to the crumbling infrastructure that is choking off the lifeblood of the country's beleaguered government.

"We are in a crisis in Venezuela," Ortega told the welders he oversaw. "If you need to stay, you should stay."

Men working for the government of Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro got to Ortega's home before he could. They beat up his wife and children and ransacked his house before burning it to the ground, Ortega said in a recent interview at a shelter in the hills of Tijuana.

"They are asking for you," Ortega's wife told him. "Don't come home."

Ortega fled north, joining a wave of Venezuelans seeking asylum elsewhere in the hemisphere. Nearly 3.9 million people have fled Venezuela, with millions more expected to follow this year, according to William Spindler, spokesman for the United Nations refugee agency.

As a result, Venezuela has overtaken China to become the No. 1 country of origin for those claiming asylum in the U.S. upon arrival or shortly after, with nearly 30,000 Venezuelans applying for asylum with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services in 2018. Nearly one-third of claims filed with the agency come from Venezuelans, the most of any country by far, according to the latest data.

That has created a dilemma for the Trump administration in which its foreign policy, which considers Maduro's government an oppressive dictatorship, is colliding with its immigration policy, which has sought aggressively to hold down the number of people admitted to the country through asylum.

Sanctions are crippling the entire continent of South America

Bowen, Mick. 6-29-2018, "Venezuelan crisis poses economic risks to South America," Latin Finance New <https://www.latinfinance.com/daily-briefs/2018/6/29/venezuelan-crisis-poses-economic-risks-to-south-america>

The continued economic decline in Venezuela threatens to stifle growth in Colombia and the rest of South America as a rising number of immigrants strains public finances, Moody's said in a report.

"A worsening of Venezuela's crisis would deal a small but significant setback to growth prospects in Colombia, Peru and Chile, and force governments to contend with a continent-wide refugee crisis," Moody's said.

President Nicolás Maduro clung to power at the polls in May, after a boycott by the main opposition parties led to record low voter turnout and allowed the sitting president to collect 68% of the ballots cast. Maduro's victory has all but ruled out the prospect of enacting economic reforms in the near future, but the beleaguered president must take measures to halt the economic slump if he wants to stay in office, Moody's said.

Moody's calculated that Maduro has a 50% chance of serving his six-year term and introducing limited economic reforms to reduce inflation and stop the fall in oil production. Under the scenario, the government gradually unwinds gasoline subsidies, which increases revenues for the state-owned oil company PDVSA and keeps oil flowing to creditors in China and Russia. The Maduro administration also ends the current system with multiple exchange rates and introduces a new currency that is pegged to the dollar, Moody's said.

The US government does not lift economic sanctions, however, and the Venezuelan government and PDVSA cannot go to the cross-border bond market to raise the money needed to increase oil production, dropping output to 500,000 barrels per day, or one-fifth of the average production levels before oil prices collapsed in late 2014, Moody's said.

"At the end of Maduro's six-year term, the Venezuelan economy is barely any larger," Moody's said in the report. But the economic impact remains confined mostly to Venezuela, with limited effects to the country's Andean neighbors and no meaningful impressions on the economies of Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay, Moody's said.

The rating agency also said Maduro has a 20% chance of finishing his mandate while keeping current currency policies in place and not lifting gasoline subsidies. In this case, oil production falls to less than 300,000 barrels per day, hyperinflation runs rampant and a higher number of Venezuelans leave the country.

Venezuela's accelerated decline under this scenario contains economic prospects across South America, especially in Colombia, where the knock-on effect will shave 0.2 percentage points off GDP growth through 2020. The setback will be smaller in Peru and Chile, Moody's said.

Colombia, Chile and Peru have not offered much financial support to Venezuelan immigrants, but the rising number of arrivals could force the governments to spend more money on food, healthcare and basic public services, Moody's said.

Almost 1m Venezuelans have moved to Colombia in the past two years, while another 250,000 have gone to Peru and Chile. Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay could become more important destinations for Venezuelan immigrants if the economic situation does not improve at home, Moody's said.

Moody's said it is 30% likely that Maduro does not end his term, the United States lifts sanctions and the IMF grants a loan to restructure Venezuela's foreign debt. Lifting price controls will cause inflation to spike in the near term, but cuts in public spending and higher interest rates will rein in consumer prices. The economy will dip in 2019 but start recovering the next year as oil production picks up and multinational oil companies increase investments.

The Venezuelan recovery provides a significant bump in economic growth in Colombia, Peru and Chile, along with a limited impact in Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina. Many Venezuelans return home, encouraged by improved job prospects and a growing economy, Moody's said.

"The odds of a Maduro exit are less than even, but they are not slim," Moody's said. "Few governments have outlasted the social tensions kindled by hyperinflation."

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Human Trafficking

Sanctions are not just used to change governments, but they are also used to influence government policy. In the case of Venezuela, there are two major areas of influence that the United States and others have sought to change. The first we will address is that of human trafficking.

The human trade is as old as time, and in Venezuela, it has found a home. Let's examine the three main influences of human trafficking and how sanctions have affected their growth. First, when we look at the political, since the mid 2000's, the international community has been putting pressure on the nation to crack down on the transit of men, women, and children through and across of their borders. However, the gangs and smuggling rings that operate in Venezuela have long since established a network of bribery networks that keep local police and prosecution at bay. Furthermore, the major smuggling rings are major political donors to the Maduro political machine. These factors combined means that there is little appetite for political change and crackdowns on trafficking. When pressed at UN hearings and before international tribunals, the nation has refused to release data on the number of arrests that have been associated with human trafficking or how many people they believe are being held against their will within the confines of the nation.

This situation is worsened by the declining economic conditions. As stated elsewhere in this brief, the economic conditions in Venezuela have pushed citizens to either flee or to take drastic actions. Families that have been forced out of their homes and onto the streets and into the jungles make easy targets for human traffickers. According to a report from the UN Human Rights omission in 2018, the human trafficking industry in Venezuela is worth 13.1 billion US dollars and growing at a rate of at least 68% a year. This number is staggering as the next closest number is out of eastern Europe and is only in the single digits. Recent reports from the United Nations and other humanitarian rights groups state that as the country is further pushed into a depression by economic hardships, some of which are caused by the sanctions by the Western nations, the growth of human trafficking as a stable form of economic prosperity will continue to flourish.

The final issue is the civil rights that women and children face. For a decade, the rights of women and children have been degraded. Equality has been eroded through regime after regime of harsh rule. Chavez and now Maduro have rolled back protections for women in areas such as sexual assault, self-defense, the right to file a criminal complaint, and the ability to seek medical attention for attacks. Children's rights have been almost destroyed as rights concerning child protection and child labor have been almost dissolved. Gender equality rights have been rolled back to a state of nothing, and according to a recent congressional research report, Venezuela ranks in the top 10 for human rights violations concerning women and children. What this equates to is a situation where even if a woman or a child is able to escape from their

captors, there is little help. In some cases, and as stated above, the very authorities might be working with the traffickers.

So, we look to effectiveness of sanctions and see that over the past decade, not much has changed in the government even though there have been sanctions levied against the nation in order to curb the rise of human trafficking. In fact, one might argue that the sanctions are actually causing a situation that allows for more trafficking to occur. For the pro, this should be an easy point to make as you just need to link sanctions to the deplorable economic conditions and how that enables trafficking. In the con world, you will need to play defense. You will need to go after the head of the government, Maduro and argue that his government and policies are really to blame. His corruption would be there no matter the policy of sanctions and thus in either world, we will have human trafficking. For the pro team, you will also need an impact scenario. I recommend a two-pronged approach. The first is the human rights approach and the second is to argue that the trafficking funds either regional terrorism or narcotics trafficking. Judges will vote on human rights alone, but in a world where judges lean towards wanting concrete issues to weigh, it is always better to have multiple impacts. I have never had a team that has lost a round because they had too many impacts in case.

Sample Evidence

Venezuela is a major contributor to human trafficking

Universal Declaration Of Human Rights, 7-23-2019, "Venezuela: Economic Sanctions and Human Rights," Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, <https://humanrightscommission.house.gov/events/hearings/venezuela-economic-sanctions-and-human-rights>

For more than a decade, the United States has employed various sanctions as a policy tool in response to concerns about the activities of the Venezuelan government or Venezuelan individuals. These have included sanctions related to terrorism, drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, antidemocratic actions, human rights violations, and corruption. As of July 5, 2019, the Treasury Department had imposed financial sanctions on 115 individuals, and the State Department had revoked the visas of hundreds of individuals. Of those subject to financial sanctions, 85 have been targeted under Executive Order 13692 issued by President Obama to implement the Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014, legislation passed by Congress in response to increasing repression in Venezuela.

In addition to the sanctions on individuals, since August 2017 President Trump has signed three executive orders that block financial transactions by the Venezuelan government. In November 2018 and January 2019 Trump issued additional executive orders that have been used to block property and transactions involving Petroleos de Venezuela, PdVSA, Venezuela's state-owned oil company, as well as banks and shipping vessels. Taken together, these sanctions have made it harder for Venezuela to sell oil, its main commodity, and to import goods, including food and medicines.

Meanwhile, since at least 2015 Venezuela has been characterized by economic contraction and a worsening humanitarian crisis. GDP has fallen every quarter since the start of 2014, according to the Venezuelan Central Bank. Also according to government sources, the neonatal death rate in 2015 was 100 times greater than in 2012, while the number of people who reported eating two meals or less per day tripled between 2015 and 2016 and nearly three-quarters of the population reported losing weight unintentionally. Out-migration has been accelerating since 2016. In 2017 1.64 million Venezuelans lived abroad compared to 697,562 in 2015, according to the International Organization for Migration. By February 2019 IOM estimated that 3.4 million Venezuelans were living outside their country.

Violations of civil and political rights, the closing of political space, arbitrary detention, torture and extrajudicial executions in Venezuela have been widely documented, most recently by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and have led many to support maximal use of economic sanctions to pressure for rapid political change. But there is growing concern that the sanctions are deepening the humanitarian crisis and further undermining Venezuelans' economic and social rights while resolution of the political crisis remains elusive. The briefing will examine this concern.

Venezuela continues to violate international trafficking laws

Gurney, Kyra. 12-19-2019, "US Chastises Colombia, Venezuela for Response to Human Trafficking," InSight Crime, <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/brief/colombia-venezuela-chastised-response-human-trafficking/>

Both Colombia and Venezuela have dropped down a category in the US State Department's most recent human trafficking report, as the region continues to struggle to find effective ways to combat human smuggling, sex trafficking, and forced labor.

In the newly released 2014 Trafficking in Persons Report, Venezuela dropped from the Tier Two Watch List — the third lowest of the four rankings — to Tier Three in 2014 due to the country's failure to present a written plan to bring the government into compliance with international laws.

According to the report, Venezuelan nationals are subjected to both sex trafficking within the country and trafficking from the coastal region to nearby Caribbean islands. Venezuela is also a destination for trafficking victims from a number of Latin American, Asian and African countries, with Ecuadorean children in particular forced into domestic servitude.

Colombia also dropped a category in 2014, from Tier One to Tier Two. Although the US State Department recognized the country's efforts, it said the government does not fully comply with international standards, particularly in its efforts to eradicate internal human trafficking. The report identified the legal classification of internal trafficking as one area in need of improvement, noting that the sex trafficking of children was often reported as induction into prostitution and pimping, which can result in shorter prison sentences.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Venezuela and Colombia are the second and third most affected by human trafficking in Latin America, after Panama.

In Colombia, the country's armed conflict and deeply rooted organized crime groups have exacerbated the problem, with illegal armed groups forcing children into combat, prostitution and drug cultivation. Sex trafficking in particular is also linked to broader factors, including booms in tourism and in the extractive industries, with both foreign visitors and itinerant mine workers making for a lucrative client base for traffickers.

In Venezuela, on the other hand, trafficking appears to have flourished due to an inefficient and ineffective state response, despite efforts last year to train government employees and legal reforms in a new anti-human trafficking law passed in 2010. According to the report, officials have even been implicated in trafficking, with reports of forced labor among Cuban citizens — particularly doctors — working in Venezuela as part of a labor-for-oil exchange.

Inclusion in the Tier Three category can result in economic sanctions, although as El Pais noted, China and Russia were not subjected to sanctions last year in spite of their blacklisting in the 2013 human trafficking report because it was deemed not in the US "national interest."

On the other hand, Cuba — the only Latin American country besides Venezuela to receive a Tier Three categorization this year — has previously been sanctioned. It remains to be seen whether Venezuela, a

major supplier of oil to the United States but also one of the US government's main antagonists in the region, will now face punitive measures.

Venezuela one of the worst human trafficking countries

Brunnstrom, David. 6-20-2014, "U.S. says Thailand, Malaysia, Venezuela among worst human trafficking centers," U.S., <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trafficking-sanctions/u-s-says-thailand-malaysia-venezuela-among-worst-human-trafficking-centers-idUSKBN0EV19S20140620>

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The U.S. State Department downgraded Thailand, Malaysia and Venezuela on Friday to its list of the world's worst centers of human trafficking, opening up the countries to possible sanctions and dumping them in the same category as North Korea and Syria.

The three countries were all downgraded to the lowest "Tier 3" status in the U.S. State Department's 2014 Trafficking in Persons Report as they did not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking.

Thai officials repeatedly expressed confidence their country would be upgraded, submitting a 78-page report to the U.S. government in April to make its case.

The downgrades could cause some multinational companies to reconsider investments in industries accused of using trafficked labor such as fisheries, a lucrative business in Thailand, the world's largest exporter of shrimp.

The countries could also lose U.S. non-humanitarian and non-trade-related aid, and they could face U.S. opposition to help from international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

The report said the majority of trafficking victims in Thailand - "tens of thousands ... by conservative estimates" - were migrants from neighboring countries "forced, coerced, or defrauded into labor or exploited in the sex trade." A significant number were trafficked into the fishing industry, garment production and domestic work.

The State Department also cited media reports of "trafficking-related complicity by Thai civilian and navy personnel in crimes involving the exploitation" of Rohingya Muslims who have fled Myanmar by the tens of thousands over the past year.

Those reports included a Reuters story in December that documented a clandestine Thai policy to remove Rohingya from immigration detention centers and deliver them to traffickers and smugglers waiting at sea. Many Rohingya were then ferried back to brutal trafficking camps in Thailand, where some died.

The State Department said that not only had the government "systematically" failed to prosecute trafficking into the fishing industry, but the Thai navy had also filed defamation charges against two

journalists who reprinted reports of complicity of civilian and naval personnel in exploitation of Rohingya asylum seekers from Myanmar.

That was a reference to criminal defamation charges filed by Thailand's navy against two journalists at Phuketwan, a small English-language news website based in Phuket, which published selected excerpts from a July Reuters report.

The Reuters report, based on interviews with people smugglers and more than two dozen survivors of boat voyages, revealed how some Thai naval security forces worked systematically with smugglers to profit from the surge in Rohingya fleeing Myanmar to escape religious persecution.

The Thai navy has also filed a criminal complaint against two Reuters journalists, alleging violations of the Computer Crimes Act. Reuters has not been charged and stands by its reporting, a Reuters spokesman said.

"We have seen interlocutors who we think are actually trying hard, but of course that gets dragged down by the widespread official complicity," U.S. Ambassador at-Large Luis CdeBaca of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons told Reuters.

"It's kind of like an anchor that is holding the folks who seem to be wanting to make a difference back."

Thailand, Malaysia and Venezuela promote themselves as modern, fast-developing countries, but their Tier 3 ranking puts them among the world's most lawless, oppressive and dysfunctional.

A third of Tier 3 countries, among them Mauritania and Yemen, also appear on the United Nations list of least-developed nations. Many Tier 3 countries (Syria, Central African Republic) are at war; others (Zimbabwe, North Korea) are dictatorships.

In the year ended March 31, the period covered by the report, the Thai government said it had made "significant progress" in combating human trafficking. It cited data that showed it convicted 225 people for this crime in 2013, compared with 49 in 2012, among other measures.

But despite frequent media and non-governmental organization reports documenting forced labor among migrants, the State Department report said, the Thai government "demonstrated few efforts to address these trafficking crimes."

"Impunity for pervasive trafficking-related corruption continued to impede progress in combating trafficking," the report said.

The report found Malaysia had made "inadequate efforts to improve its flawed victim-protection regime" and had investigated fewer trafficking cases in 2013 than in 2012. The Malaysian downgrade had been largely expected

The report said Venezuela was making insufficient efforts to combat sex trafficking and forced labor as it had failed to come up with a written plan to bring it into compliance with minimum standards for eliminating trafficking.

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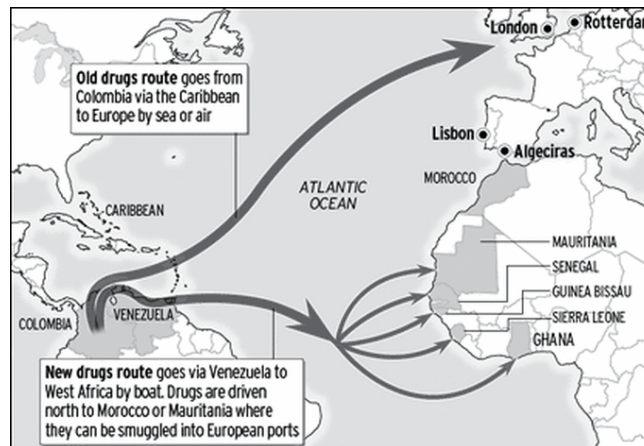
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Narcotics Trafficking

On to the second of the reforms that the United States has hoped to institute in Venezuela. The drug trade has been a South American issue for decades. In some parts of the continent, the drug trade employs more people than non-drug trade work. For these people, the harsh alternative is starvation or underemployment at the hands of a poorly managed federal economy with poor access to international markets. To these workers, this is a way of life.

According to a study from 2009, the vast majority of cocaine entering the US, roughly 85% still comes from Columbia. Another 5% enters the United States via the islands, while the remaining 10% originates in Venezuela. Even if it is not directly shipped from the nation, Venezuela is a popular route for drug trafficking routes as it avoids most major law enforcement hurdles. Like the case of human trafficking, the police in many principalities are being fed kickbacks from the drug trade or are under the constant threat from the gangs. In other cases, the drug cartels are major contributors to political parties and are thus protected by the government. One study from 2010 found that almost all drug smuggling planes that landed in Honduras were from Venezuela with destinations in Canada and the United States. In recent years, the drug epidemic has branched out to include most major forms of drugs including marijuana and methamphetamine.



<https://drugcartelawareness.weebly.com/south-america.html>

The issue is magnified by the impacts that extend beyond the drug use and spread. Drugs are a known source of funding for terrorist organizations in and around Central and South America. Hezbollah has been known to operate cells out of the region so they can profit from the illegal drug trade and fund their terrorist organization. The drug trade fuels the purchase of illegal arms that are distributed to rebel groups across the region with the hopes of spreading disorder and allowing the Maduro regime to claim more power. In 2014, the FARC

rebels in Columbia were caught receiving shipments of drugs for resale in Mexico from the Venezuelan government. It was at this time that the United States began to intensify the economic sanctions against the nation in hopes of changing their behavior. In 2018, the Vice President of Venezuela was sanctioned and his bank accounts were frozen after it emerged that he was the leader of the largest drug smuggling ring in the nation.

The government of Venezuela has objected to the sanctions as they claim that they have very little power over the drug trafficking. Cartels and gangs like the Cuntrera-Caruana Mafia clan and the Norte del Valle Cartel control large shares of the drug trade and remain resistant to government crackdowns when they occur. However, the reply from the international community is that the actions of the government to crack down on the gangs is far from sufficient and is only attempting to distract from the real issues at hand. Also, this does not address the fact that many government officials are the ones doing the dealing. Former President Hugo Chavez was known for flaunting his ties to organized crime and the drug trade and as stated above, the Vice President was sanctioned for moonlighting as a drug kingpin. In fact, a report from the Washington Post in 2015 stated that Columbian drug cartels were moving from Columbia to Venezuela as the pressure from law enforcement was so great in Columbia they could no longer afford the bribes and that the Venezuelan government had promised to keep their fees and taxes low. So, like how cities in the US will subsidize property taxes when Google builds a data center, the Venezuelan government subsidizes the drug dealers.

With this all being said, have we seen any results from our current sanctions? The answer is likely no. For a con team to win this argument, you will need to argue a stronger impact than the link exists. What I mean by this is that even though the solvency is close to 0, you will need to argue that letting terrorist groups gain access to financial means is so devastating that any retreat from the status quo would be devastating. You will need to hope that you can overwhelm the judge with the fear of a terrorist attack and ignore the fact that sanctions are effectively worthless in this regard. On the pro, you would want to argue that at worst, sanctions are a neutral force that causes groups to find alternatives and at worst, the sanctions force alternatives that harm the civilians. Be sure to run defense on the terrorism impacts that are sure to be brought up as those are pretty much the only offense the con will have going.

Sample Evidence

Venezuela providing passports to Hezbollah

Sputnik News Service, 12, 9, 19

The United States is aware that Venezuela has provided passports to members of Lebanon's Hezbollah movement and is closely investigating the matter, a US Treasury Department official said during a briefing on Monday. "We are very concerned that members of Hezbollah do possess Venezuelan passports. We are investigating this matter very, very closely," the official told reporters. The United States has designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organization and considers it to be a regional proxy of Iran. On Monday, the US government sanctioned two Venezuelan officials - Gustavo Adolfo Vizcaino Gil and Juan Carlos Dugarte Padron - under the Global Magnitsky Act. The US government said that Gil and Padron, successive directors of Venezuela's immigration authority, have engaged in corrupt dealings involving the sale of passports. The Treasury Department official also said that designating Gil and Padron did not imply they provided passports to Hezbollah members.

Venezuela the source for drug routes

"South America," Drug Cartel, <https://drugcartelawareness.weebly.com/south-america.html>

Venezuela has been a path to the United States for illegal drugs originating in Colombia, through Central America and Mexico and Caribbean countries such as Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico. 90% of US cocaine is sourced from Colombia, and Venezuela and the Caribbean account for around 10% of US-destined cocaine trans-shipments.

Another significant route is directed to export cocaine, marijuana and other illegal drugs by sea shipments from Venezuela to Europe, with half of all direct shipments to Europe in 2006-2008 originating in Venezuela. Venezuela ranks fourth in the world for cocaine seizures, behind Colombia, the United States, and Panama. In 2010 Venezuela arrested and deported to the United States Jaime Alberto Beto Marin, the head of the Colombian Norte del Valle Cartel.

Maduro's government is full of illegal drug trade proponents

Venezuela Investigative Unit, 12-19-2019, "Drug Trafficking Within the Venezuelan Regime: The 'Cartel of the Suns'," InSight Crime, <https://www.insightcrime.org/investigations/drug-trafficking-venezuelan-regime-cartel-of-the-sun/>

Instead of sidelining those accused of drug trafficking, Maduro has promoted them to the highest offices, perhaps calculating that they have the most to lose if his regime falls and will therefore fight the hardest to preserve it.

The most powerful figures in the Bolivarian regime now have the taint of drug trafficking to differing degrees.

Diosdado Cabello is touted as either the second-most powerful figure in the Venezuela regime, or the puppet master — the power behind Maduro. Either way, with his influence over the appointment of officials to key posts, especially within the military, there is no way that he is not aware of the drug trafficking dynamics in the country. Sources in the US Justice Department spoke to InSight Crime about Cabello on condition of anonymity.

"Look, this guy is up to his neck in all sorts of illegal activity in Venezuela and we are building a case against him. But he knows how to protect himself and keep a distance from the dirty work," said the source.

In May 2015, the Wall Street Journal revealed that Cabello was being investigated for drug trafficking and being a leader of the Cartel of the Suns. Evidence has been provided by, among others, Leasmy Salazar, who used to work as Cabello's chief of security. He has testified that Cabello plays a leading role in drugs passing through Venezuela.

Salazar with Cabello and former President Chávez

Cabello immediately sued the Wall Street Journal for defamation, but a US court in April this year rejected the case. Also named in the article was his brother David Cabello.

On paper, the second-most important man in government is Vice President Tareck El Aissami. He has also been accused of illegal activity, including drug trafficking. Before becoming vice president, he was governor of the state of Aragua, and InSight Crime was collecting testimony on his links to organized crime in this strategic province on the Caribbean coast.

Once of the most important positions in terms of internal security is the head of the National Guard. That position was held by Major General Néstor Reverol — now Interior Minister — who has been indicted in the United States for drug trafficking. His indictment states that Reverol warned drug traffickers of operations against them, blocked investigations, released arrested narcos and ensured that seized drugs were returned to traffickers.

Cilia Flores, the wife of President Maduro and therefore first lady, has also been implicated in drug trafficking by association. Not only have her nephews been convicted in the United States of cocaine trafficking, but her son, Walter Jacobo Gavidia, a Caracas Metropolitan Area judge, is also under investigation. She has also been linked to the case of Captain Yazenky Antonio Lamas Rondón, a

Venezuelan pilot extradited from Colombia the United States to face drug charges. He has been accused of more than a hundred narco flights in the past decade from the Venezuelan state of Apure to the Caribbean.

Drug trafficking is the only business thriving. It's a superhighway

Walsh, Nick Paton. Gallón Natalie and Castrillon, Diana. Cnn, 4-17-2019, "Corruption in Venezuela has created a cocaine superhighway to the US," CNN, <https://www.cnn.com/2019/04/17/americas/venezuela-drug-cocaine-trafficking-intl/index.html>

Cocaine trafficking from Venezuela to the United States is soaring, even as the country collapses. And US and other regional officials say it's Venezuela's own military and political elite who are facilitating the passage of drugs in and out of the country on hundreds of tiny, unmarked planes.

A months-long CNN investigation traced the northward route of cocaine from the farmlands where much of it is grown in Colombia, and found that the number of suspected drug flights from Venezuela has risen from about two flights per week in 2017 to nearly daily in 2018, according to one US official. This year, the same official has seen as many as five nighttime flights in the sky at once.

Planes loaded with Colombian cocaine used to depart from Venezuela's remote southern jungle regions. Now they take off from the country's more developed northwest region to reduce their flying time, US and regional officials also said.

Officials involved in combating the deadly trade describe a ridiculously profitable courier system for the Venezuelan government. "Drug smugglers are more and more exploiting the complicity of Venezuelan authorities, and more recently the vacuum of power," said one US official. Every shipment of cocaine from South America is so lucrative that the planes flown by traffickers are cheap in comparison; most are used only once and then discarded or set on fire upon arrival.

A sizable fraction of the profits go to countries through which the drugs pass, from the jungles of Colombia through Venezuela and often to the Honduran coastline. A confidential 2018 US radar map of the plane routes seen by CNN shows their departure from northwestern Venezuela's Zulia region, their passage north to the Caribbean, and then their sharp turn West toward their destinations in the remote farmlands of Guatemala, on the Honduran coastline, and some in the Caribbean. From there, the drugs are shipped up to Mexico and then distributed to American cities.

One US official estimated that in 2018 alone, 240 metric tons (265 tons for US readers) of cocaine crossed into Venezuela from Colombia to be flown out of the country. Other officials involved in combating the drug trade said that estimate was conservative. So much pure Colombian cocaine, when cut and distributed, could fetch around \$39 billion on the streets of the US, according to an estimate by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for CNN.

US officials recently expressed concern that a proposed ban by President Donald Trump on all types of aid to Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador would create a "bonanza" among the Venezuelan-led

traffickers, as US aid to these three Central American countries specifically targeted the cocaine trade. "Right now, it's wide open," said one US law enforcement officer, "then it'll just be a free for all."

Years of allegations

For years, the US has accused high-ranking Venezuelan officials of drug trafficking. Today's accelerating drug trade is a symptom of the urgent need for cash inside Venezuela's crumbling hyperinflation economy, and rampant corruption among the Maduro government's senior officials, multiple officials said. Colombian officials who would rarely be quoted on the record also said that the drug smuggling has recently involved Colombian leftist guerrilla group ELN working with the Maduro military.

In 2017, former Venezuelan Vice President Tareck El Aissami was sanctioned by the US Treasury for overseeing or partially owning "narcotics shipments of over 1,000 kilograms (2,200 pounds) from Venezuela on multiple occasions." In March, El Aissami, now Venezuela's minister for industry, was indicted in New York for facilitating drug trafficking.

He did not respond to the new charges, but tweeted two days after they were unsealed: "LOYAL always! ANTIIMPERIALISTS always !! PATRIOTS always !! CHAVISTAS ALWAYS !! WE WILL OVERCOME!!!"

In May 2018, Diosdado Cabello, the leader of Venezuela's National Constituent Assembly and embattled President Nicolas Maduro's number two, was also sanctioned for being "directly involved in narcotics trafficking activities." He has replied there is no evidence of his involvement in trafficking, and said of sanctions against him in general: "If there are persecuted politicians, those are the Venezuelan officials sanctioned by the US. You can keep your sanctions."

Many other Venezuelan officials have faced similar US accusations, which the Venezuelan government has outright rejected. They did not comment for this report, despite several requests.

Venezuela's scramble for cash, owing to hyperinflation caused by economic mismanagement, has led to an increase in the risks taken by pilots. Another US official said they were often former commercial airline pilots who used to fly passenger jets. "Thirty planes roughly have crashed in the last three-month period, according to some reports," said one US official.

The scale of the operation was confirmed by a government official in the region, who said the flights use around 50 clandestine runways in the northwestern region of Zulia in Venezuela. The drug cargo planes usually fly with the transponders that emit a signal identifying them to radar systems switched off.

Secret runways

CNN gained access with the elite Honduran military force known as Fusina to visit areas of Honduras' Moskitia region where the drug-smuggling planes from Venezuela land on secret runways.

Tail-fin markings on nearly all the planes found by CNN in Moskitia show they originated in the US. The first US official told CNN that dozens of planes had been bought at US auctions by shell companies and then shipped south.

Some of the planes lay damaged, rusting and exposed on the edge of makeshift former airstrips, rendered unusable by large craters created by Honduran military explosives. Others were hidden, submerged in the bend of a river, yet visible from the helicopter.

Honduran military officers told CNN the traffickers had managed to reach an understanding with local fishermen on how to recover cocaine lost in accidents or interceptions by law enforcement. If a smuggler anticipates he might be caught, he throws the cocaine overboard, attached to a flotation device. Such bundles usually weigh 30 kilos (66 pounds), and fishermen are paid \$150,000 if they hand them back to the cartels.

While US technological assistance has helped reduce the number of illegal drug flights coming out of Colombian territory to almost zero, traffickers have an easy alternative just across the border in Venezuela. "One of the problems we face is that the border area is very large," Colombian Colonel Mauricio Gonzalez told CNN. "We've stopped the flights that try to depart Colombia with drugs, but narcotraffickers take advantage of the areas we cannot control."

Crossing the border

Ongoing tensions, in which Colombia has recognized Venezuela's opposition leader Juan Guaido as its interim president, meant few Colombian officials would mention Venezuela by name. But it was clear that most of the cocaine grown in Colombia's Vichada border region is trafficked across the long, porous eastern border.

The Colombian Air Force flew CNN over Vichada, to see the dozens of "trochas", or tiny pathways, along which pure cocaine powder or less refined paste is trafficked. Small clearings in the forest where coca leaves are harvested, and tiny white shacks -- suspected of being cocaine laboratories -- were easy to spot.

The Colombian helicopters are not allowed to fly closer than five miles to Venezuela's actual border, and stay above 2,300 feet to avoid risking the machine-gun fire of drug traffickers below. The helicopter CNN flew in dropped leaflets on the villages below, encouraging locals to respect the environment they lived in, an oblique code for turning their backs on the drug trade.

Once inside Venezuela, the drugs are then whisked through military checkpoints and escorted or waved on by the army, allege US and regional officials and several Venezuelan army defectors.

A defector from the Venezuelan border patrol told CNN that it was once his task to pick out trucks carrying traffickers' cocaine and ensure they passed through the border swiftly. He said this happened as often as three times a week, during the five-year period he served in the border region.

"Brainwashed with food handouts"

"The cars that crossed with both weapons and drugs were pick-up (trucks)," the defector told CNN, hiding his identity and location for fear of reprisals. "We would be told the color and make of the truck, and when (it would come) -- usually at just after dawn or dusk."

Speaking in hiding with his family in Colombia, he said his senior officers provided precise instructions. "Everything was coordinated by the brigade commander. He'd send a lieutenant to tell you what needed to cross, and this was arranged high up above. Those who didn't agree were swapped out... Automatically."

The defector described how tensions mounted in the early months of 2019, as the power struggle between Guaido and Maduro ramped up inside his border region. His unit was almost confined to barracks, but permitted to let the vital border contraband continue at pace.

"We were locked on the base" when not on duty, he said. "The general would say: 'Everyone must be with us. Leave, or speak against the government -- you'll get arrested.'"

"They had us brainwashed with food handouts," he added, referring to the subsidized food boxes that help state employees deal with the devastating impact of hyperinflation on family food purchases.

"One night, I couldn't take it anymore. I went home, and told my wife, 'We leave for Colombia!' My son started crying and son said: 'Dad what are we going to do?' But I knew if they stayed without me they'd be captured or interrogated." He and his family fled across the border at 3 a.m., using a route the he had noticed was being badly guarded.

Further Reading

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Economy/Poverty

It's not often that we see a complete reversal of economic fortunes, but in Venezuela, we have. In the 1980's, the nation was an economic powerhouse and one of the wealthiest nations in South America. However, decades of economic mismanagement left the economy in a fragile state. Then, in the mid 2000's a rise of dictators continued to ruin the once bright prospects of economic prosperity. Under President Hugo Chavez, the country was hit with the first wave of economic sanctions, which further pushed the nation into economic decline. Since then, the economy has continued to drag itself down into the current situation that exists today.

Inflation is at an all time high of 10 million percent. Inflation is a measure of how stable the economy is, In larger terms, it is a sign as to how stable the currency is in relation to other currencies. Take for example a \$5 US bill. If I were to walk into a classroom of twenty students and give one student that bill, that student would have something of worth. It is worth something because that student has it and no one else does. However, if I were to give every student a \$5 bill, then the value would be diminished slightly as everyone has the same thing and no one has anything of special value. In the same way, currency on a national scale holds the same value. We can't just solve our economic problems by printing more money as that means that every bill that exists would be worth less. In fact, to make our currency more valuable, it stands to reason that the opposite is true; that to increase the value of currency we need to reduce the amount in circulation. This is the policy of the federal reserve as of late. They have been raising interest rates in order to make borrowing money more expensive. In doing so, they hope to restrict the amount of money in the market and thru driving up the value of current reserves. In Venezuela, their finance ministers have either forgotten their education or have been put under orders to print more because their solution has been to put more currency into circulation. This might quell the civilian unrest for money, but it actually makes the situation worst. As money becomes worth less and less, larger notes must be printed to keep pace with what is considered "normal" and "spendable" denominations. Much as with Germany in the days leading up to the rise of Hitler and other South American nations in the 1980's during the regional depression, currency printing can spin out of control fast. An inflation rate of 10 million percent is the largest on record and forecasts a dire economic situation.



<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-06-12/hyperinflation-forces-venezuela-to-roll-out-three-new-bills>

Above is a picture of the three new bills that the government is putting into circulation this year. Even in those dominations, the real rate of costs for simple items is staggering. Under the old currency, here is how large of a stack of currency would be needed to buy a 2. pound chicken in Venezuela.



<https://www.nbcnews.com/slideshow/see-how-many-bills-it-took-buy-chicken-venezuela-n902491>

That stack of bills is 14.6 million Bolívares, the currency of Venezuela. That amounts to about \$2.25 in the United States. Each day, this stack would grow bigger and the exchange rate would grow smaller. In fact, it is sadly true that the stack of money necessary to buy this chicken weighs more than the chicken. What this means for the nation and its people is huge. For a nation that was already slipping into a state of poverty prior to any economic sanctions, this gives them a giant jump into poverty. Poverty is one of the largest killers in the world. The effects of poverty have killed more people worldwide than all of the world wars and conflicts combined.

On the pro, you get the above explanation on poverty. There is evidence that exists about now only the amount of people that has been killed due to worldwide poverty, but to the sanctions in Venezuela. You also get ties to the two other South American nations as Venezuela is a key component of the economic success of the continent. The pro speaks for itself. The con

is a bit more nuanced and harder to debate. It's hard to escape the impact that the sanctions have had on the economic reality in the nation or that there have in fact been deaths tied to the sanctions. However, you are going to need to argue that the sanctions are working, and this is proof. It is putting pressure on the government for real reforms and change. You can also find defense earlier in this file that the cards that speak of 40,000 people that have been killed by sanctions is false. This provides your case with some terminal defense against the numbers debate. To go on the offense on this point, evidence exists that if we cripple the economy enough, they won't be able to recover on their own and will need help from the IMF and other aid agencies and the only way they can get aid is through accepting reforms. In this way, we get solvency through desperation. It won't be the prettiest of all con wins, but it might be the end run that you need to beat an emotionally charged pro argument.

Sample Evidence

Inflation is at 10 million percent. This is really bad. Like worse than Great Depression bad...

Sanchez, Valentina. 5-5-2017, "Venezuela hyperinflation hits 10 million percent. 'Shock therapy' may be only chance to undo the economic damage," CNBC, <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/08/02/venezuela-inflation-at-10-million-percent-its-time-for-shock-therapy.html>

Venezuela's crisis has been marked by corruption, hyperinflation, one of the world's highest homicide rates, food and medicine shortages and the largest exodus "in the recent history of Latin America," according to the U.N. Refugee Agency.

Its chances to recover may start with President Nicolas Maduro stepping down or being forcibly removed — either by the opposition or through foreign military intervention. But that would just be the first step to get the ruined economy on the road to recovery. A major course of economic shock therapy will be required.

Venezuela's hyperinflation rate increased from 9,02 percent to 10 million percent since 2018, according to the International Monetary Fund, though it is expected to decline to back below 1 million percent due to recent moves by the country's central bank, according to a recent IMF forecast.

But the economic situation remains dire: The IMF says the cumulative decline of the Venezuelan economy since 2013 will reach 65% this year — for 2019 the annual decline forecast has increased from 25% to 35%. The five-year contraction is one of the worst in the world over the past half century and one of the few that was not caused by armed conflicts or natural disasters, the IMF stated earlier this week.

Some experts believe that in order to regain control over Venezuela's monetary system and zero out hyperinflation, drastic decisions will need to be taken.

"Venezuelans who have been suffering all of this time are going to be faced with a very dramatic, very draconian policy aimed at bringing their monetary system under control," said Dr. Eduardo Gamarra, professor of politics and international relations at Florida International University.

US sanctions make it impossible for Venezuela's economic to recover, trigger IMF structural adjustment programs, and institute democratic change

Weisbrot, Mark. 2017, <https://www.thenation.com/article/trumps-sanctions-make-economic-recovery-in-venezuela-nearly-impossible/>, Trump's Sanctions Make Economic Recovery in Venezuela Nearly Impossible the Nation, September 21

At the end of August, the Trump administration imposed harsh sanctions on Venezuela that prevent the country from borrowing or selling assets in the US financial system. **The new embargo will exacerbate shortages of food, medicine, and other essential goods, while severely limiting the policy options available to pull the country out of a deep depression. Prior to these sanctions, it was possible for the Venezuelan government to launch an economic-recovery program that could have restarted economic**

growth. Unlike most countries suffering from a balance-of-payments crisis, Venezuela would not necessarily have to go through a period of “structural adjustment,” as it used to be called before IMF programs gave this term a bad reputation. In this kind of adjustment, living standards typically fall, at least temporarily, because the country has to cut imports in order to balance its external accounts. Venezuela has already cut imports by about 75 percent since 2012. This is an astounding number; Greece, for comparison, has reduced imports by about 31 percent after suffering through a depression for most of the past seven years, which is twice as long as Venezuela’s current crisis. This means that Venezuela’s economy could begin to recover fairly quickly in response to the appropriate reforms, without having to endure further declines in output or employment. Or at least that was true until Trump’s August 25 executive order. The adjustment that Venezuela needs is primarily of relative prices, most importantly its exchange rate. We can see this by looking at what has happened over the past five years. In October of 2012, inflation was running at an 18 percent annual rate, and the black-market price of \$1 was 13 BF (the domestic currency). Over the past year, inflation has been more than 600 percent, and \$1 costs more than 17,000 BF. **These two trends reinforce each other in an “inflation-depreciation” spiral. As inflation increases, more people want to hold dollars; as they buy dollars, the black-market price of the dollar rises. This increases the cost of imports, which drives up inflation, and the cycle continues.** If we look at the data from the past five years, this process has been more or less constant. Today the government still gives away more than 90 percent of its dollars at a rate of 10 BF per dollar. This is supposed to be used for the import of food, medicine, and other essential items. But you can imagine the incentives for corruption when a dollar that costs 10 BF can be sold for more than a thousand times that on the black market. Of course, the collapse of oil prices made everything much more difficult for Venezuela, since oil accounted for 95 percent of its exports and the majority of government revenue. Yet Venezuela went into recession in 2014, when oil was still more than \$100 a barrel. Policy failures, not an oil shock, precipitated the country’s financial decline. But the response to the oil-price collapse, especially maintaining the economically deadly exchange-rate system, ensured prolonged catastrophe. **The only way out of this mess is to let the currency float and allow it to reach an equilibrium.** When it has hit bottom, we would expect that much of the savings that Venezuelans have in dollars, mostly abroad, would come back, because everything is cheap in dollar terms and they would know that the exchange rate has stabilized. This is what happened in Argentina after it floated its currency, resulting in a large devaluation, at the beginning of 2002. In Venezuela’s case, stabilizing the currency would put an end to the inflation-depreciation spiral, and eliminate the black market for the dollar altogether. This exchange rate, however, is not the only adjustment in relative prices that the economy would need. There are many dysfunctional price controls that have not worked and should be removed. By 2015, for example, inflation was 180 percent annually, but food prices, which were subject to price controls, greatly surpassed that. And billions of dollars of subsidized food were going over the border to Colombia. The government’s subsidies to domestic energy, including electricity and gasoline, would also have to be reduced over time. Right now these handouts are about as big a share of the economy as total income tax collection is in the United States. This money could be used to directly subsidize food for consumers. **But with Trump’s executive order, even if Venezuela were to stabilize the exchange rate and return to growth, it would be cut off from borrowing, investment, and proprietary sources of income such as dividend payments from Venezuela-owned but US-based Citgo Petroleum. This makes a sustained recovery nearly impossible without outside help**—or a new government that is approved by the Trump administration. **The sanctions also push the country toward default, which would cause a new set of severe financial problems, including the potential seizure of Venezuela’s**

international oil assets and a drastic drop of the price of the country's oil. The sanctions also prevent recovery by making debt restructuring impossible. Debt restructuring would give Venezuela some breathing room, as it would involve a voluntary agreement with creditors to postpone current payments in exchange for new bonds. But the Trump executive order prohibits US financial institutions and individuals from participating in these bond issues. If we step back and look at Venezuela from a bird's-eye view, how does a country with 500 billion barrels of oil and hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of minerals in the ground go broke? The only way that can happen is if the country is cut off from the international financial system. Otherwise, Venezuela could sell or even collateralize some of its resources in order to get the necessary dollars. The \$7.7 billion in gold held in Central Bank reserves could be quickly collateralized for a loan; in past years, the US Treasury department used its clout to make sure that banks who wanted to finance a swap, such as JPMorgan Chase and Bank of America, did not do so. Venezuela was already mostly prevented from accessing international bond markets before Trump's executive order, but this was not irreversible. If the Venezuelan government made some reforms and the economy began to recover, they could begin to access financial markets again. And, as recently as last year, a restructuring of the debt was nearly concluded that would have deferred billions of dollars of debt payments and opened the way to new borrowing. Now Venezuela is blocked from international financial markets as long as Trump or his successor wants it to be. What can be done? Now that the Trump administration has made an open and firm commitment to regime change through the destruction of an already debilitated Venezuelan economy, it seems clear that Venezuela will have to seek outside help in order to survive. So far, no governments other than Trump's have expressed support for these sanctions, and, with the largest economy in the world, China is best placed to come to Venezuela's aid. China issued a strong statement against Trump's latest prohibitions. China supported the latest UN Security Council sanctions against North Korea in August, which were led by the US government. But, as does most of the rest of the world, China likely understands that the sanctions against Venezuela are a transparent attempt to overthrow a sovereign government. After all, Washington has been trying to oust the Venezuelan government for more than 15 years, including supporting the 2002 military coup that briefly toppled Hugo Chávez and providing hundreds of millions of dollars to opposition groups since then. China has over \$3 trillion in reserves and has loaned tens of billions of dollars to Venezuela—most of which has been repaid with the outstanding amount to be reimbursed in oil shipments. There is no way to know what Beijing would be willing to do to help, but the Venezuelan government should approach them with an economic plan that could provide some assurances that their money would not be wasted. This proposition should include the basic reforms necessary to stabilize the exchange rate and inflation. The Chinese are famously reluctant to tell a sovereign government what their economic policies should be, and they won't put such conditions on any loans or investment—unlike the US government or the US-dominated IMF and World Bank. But China may be more likely to assist Venezuela if it is presented with a sensible recovery plan. It would also be smart for Venezuela to approach the Chinese Communist Party, since it influences government decisions and has sometimes shown more solidarity with other leftist parties and governments. Countering Trump's illegal (under US as well as international law) sanctions would be beneficial for all Venezuelans. In terms of immediate effects, any aid that relieved shortages of food and medicines would be important. But Chinese loans and aid could also help lead to a negotiated solution. Although neither the Venezuelan opposition nor the government made substantial concessions during talks last fall, there is little incentive for the opposition to negotiate so long as it can count on continued economic deterioration. A recovering economy would restore that incentive for the opposition. China

has its own national interests in not wanting all of South America to be dominated by the US government again—as it was in the last century—let alone an administration that is headed by an increasingly aggressive, volatile, and disturbed president. But in this case its interests coincide with the general interest of the world, in which national sovereignty is an important, hard-won right. And as Trump looks around the world for possible military action to save his doomed presidency, the American people also have an interest in anything that can help resolve a conflict that he has already announced as a possible military target. **Most of the foreign-policy establishment and media in the United States cannot understand this, since they see the world through the lens of US power, much as they did during the Cold War; they have an exaggerated sense of American importance, capacity, and benevolence; and they do not care much about the self-determination of other nations. This leads them toward violently destructive mistakes, as in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and Libya. Their support for regime change in Venezuela is one of those mistakes.** Venezuela is a polarized country, and the conflict will almost certainly need a negotiated solution if a civil war is to be avoided. International mediation from a group of parties accepted by both sides can help; and neutral, ethical actors such as Pope Francis, who has repeatedly called for dialogue, can play a vital role. But Venezuela's future must be decided by Venezuelans, preferably through democratic elections. It should not be decided by Donald Trump

Sanctions have killed 40,000, hundreds of thousands at risk

Weisbrot Mark and Sachs, Jeffrey. Columbia University, April 2019, Economic Sanctions as Collective Punishment: The Case of Venezuela, <http://cepr.net/images/stories/reports/venezuela-sanctions-2019-04.pdf>

The Impact of Sanctions on Human Life and Health **One result of the sanctions**, as described above, **is to deprive the Venezuelan economy of many billions of dollars of foreign exchange needed to pay for essential and life-saving imports.** The sanctions implemented in 2019, including the recognition of a parallel government, accelerated this deprivation and also cut off Venezuela from most of the international payments system, thus ending much of the country's access to these essential imports including medicine and food — even those that could normally be bought with available dollars. There is no doubt that **all of these sanctions** since August 2017 **have had severe impacts on human life and health.** According to the National Survey on Living Conditions (ENCOVI by its acronym in Spanish), an annual survey of living conditions administered by three Venezuelan universities, **there was a 31 percent increase in general mortality from 2017 to 2018. This would imply an increase of more than 40,000 deaths. More than 300,000 people were estimated to be at risk because of lack of access to medicines or treatment. This includes an estimated 80,000 people with HIV who have not had antiretroviral treatment since 2017, 16,000 people who need dialysis, 16,000 people with cancer, and 4 million with diabetes and hypertension (many of whom cannot obtain insulin or cardiovascular medicine).** These numbers by themselves virtually guarantee that the current sanctions, which are much more severe than those implemented before this year, are a death sentence for tens of thousands of Venezuelans. This is especially true if the projected 67 percent drop in oil revenue materializes in 2019. The accelerating economic collapse that current sanctions have locked in assure further impacts on health, and premature deaths. For example, the increasing collapse of export revenue — and therefore imports — has also created massive public health problems in the areas of water and sanitation. The

electricity crisis has also impacted hospitals and health care. Food imports have dropped sharply along with overall imports; in 2018 they were estimated at just \$2.46 billion, as compared with \$11.2 billion in 2013. They can be expected to plummet further in 2019, along with imports generally, contributing to malnutrition and stunting in children. **The United Nations finds that the groups most vulnerable to the accelerating crisis include children and adolescents (including many who can no longer attend school); people who are in poverty or extreme poverty; pregnant and nursing women; older persons; indigenous people; people in need of protection; women and adolescent girls at risk; people with disabilities; and people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex.**

Poverty outweighs an ongoing thermonuclear war

Gilligan, James. Department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, 2000 edition, *Violence: Reflections on Our Deadliest Epidemic*, p. 195-196

The 14 to 18 million deaths a year caused by structural violence compare with about 100,000 deaths per year from armed conflict. Comparing this frequency of deaths from structural violence to the frequency of those caused by major military and political violence, such as World War II (an estimated 49 million military and civilian deaths, including those caused by genocide--or about eight million per year, 1935-1945), the Indonesian massacre of 1965-1966 (perhaps 575,000 deaths), the Vietnam war (possibly two million, 1954-1973), and even a hypothetical nuclear exchange between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R (232 million), it was clear that even war cannot begin to compare with structural violence, which continues year after year. In other word, every fifteen years, on the average, as many people die because of relative poverty as would be killed in a nuclear war that caused 232 million deaths; and every single year, two to three times as many people die from poverty throughout the world as were killed by the Nazi genocide of the Jews over a six-year period. This is, in effect, the equivalent of an ongoing, unending, in fact accelerating, thermonuclear war, or genocide, perpetrated on the weak and poor every year of every decade, throughout the world.

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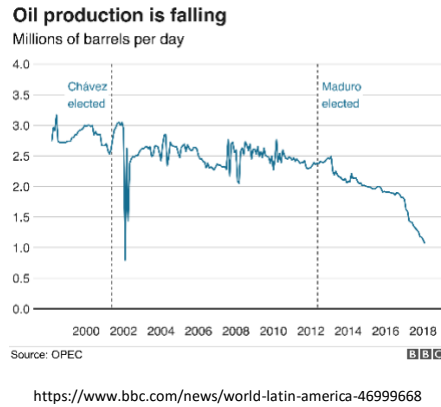
Russia

For those of you that know me, you know that I can't write a brief without at least once talking about Russia. Based on the sheer number of video games, movies, and books, neither can pop culture. It was only recently that a Command and Conqueror game had a villain that wasn't the Russians.

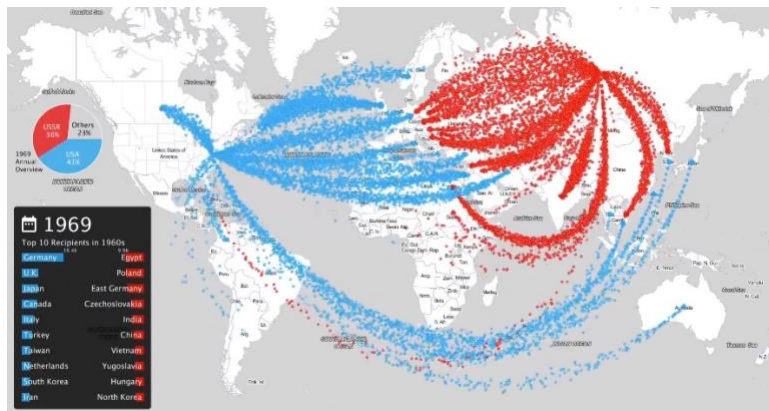
Going back to the early days of the United States, our leaders feared influence in regional affairs from powers that were looking to limit American expansion. From the day of our nation's birth, we were allies but also adversaries in terms of exploration and expansion on two continents that were rich with natural resources and expansion space. Under President James Monroe, the US government issued the Monroe Doctrine. This edict proclaimed that settlement in the Western hemisphere was allowed but interfering in the affairs of the United States in any other nation was forbidden and would be taken as an act of hostility. So if the United States had established a relationship with a nation in Central America, other nations were forbidden from trying to tamper with that relationship. It also forbids hostilities aimed at the United States in these regions. Now, nations for various degrees have violated this edict over the last 200 years, but the principal remains governing American foreign policy. In the 1960's, it was a call to arms under this doctrine that brought us to the brink of war with the USSR in Cuba over the nuclear missile program. Government changes in Panama and Nicaragua in the 1980's was all fostered at promoting government with less ties to foreign powers and more ties to US backed programs. Recently however, we have seen our sphere of influence challenged by the Russians as they seek to expand their economic ties.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russians were eager to reclaim territory and influence in the West to counterbalance the United States. The fracturing of the USSR and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in 1991 left Russia free to be encircled by allies of the United States. NATO's expansion into the far North and with alliances in South Korea, Japan, and the newly formed former Soviet satellite states left Russia uneasy at being circled by a nuclear superpower that had once pledged to level every city should the timing be right. In South America, the Russians saw their chance. The Central and South American governments had things that the Russians needed like precious metals like gold, silver, copper, and iron, coal, and most importantly, oil.

Oil is special because not all oil is created the same. Oil comes in two forms, light sweet crude and heavy. Heavy has a higher sulfur content and is good for making things like tar and other industrial products while light sweet is used for gas production. However, light sweet needs a ratio mix of both types in order for it to be successfully refined into top grade gas. Venezuela has a large supply of light sweet but little in the way of heavy. Russia has lots of heavy by little in the way of light sweet. Thus, an alliance was born in the late 1990's for trade deals related to oil



Beyond oil, Venezuela’s third largest exports are its metals. Gold, silver, and copper are both valuable and necessary in the manufacturing of microprocessors for weapons systems and commercial computers. The Russians have been impetrating hundreds of tons of the metals for their industries for years. Agricultural products like corn and beans have been shipped to Russia in exchange for wheat and seafood products caught on the Arctic Ocean fishing ring. And most importantly to Venereal, weapons and arms are imported by the container to fuel Maduro’s armies and death squads. All of the above have been limited by the United States sanctions on Venezuela. In return, we have put a clamp on Russia’s aspirations to influence the nation and create a base of operations as well as putting a hindrance on several sectors of their economy.



<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/arms-sales-usa-vs-russia-1950-2017/>

What this all leads up to is twofold. First is a potential for a clash of Russia and the US both in terms of diplomatic ideals and of physical war. As both nations come head to head over the sanctions in Venezuela, they are maneuvering their military powers in an attempt to saber rattle. This increases the chance of confrontation and potentially a war either by miscalculations by one side or as an intentional conflict. The second is an impact on the Russian economy. The Russian economy wasn’t the strongest framework in the world prior to the

sanctions, but in a world where a not insignificant sector of their economy is being pressured via Venezuelan sanctions, then it will have an effect. As the argument chain would go, the brink is now and that any further disruption would cause Russian collapse leading to either a worldwide chain reaction or as a former policy debater would argue, global nuclear war.

The way that a pro team would argue this is that the economic sanctions felt by Russia as a side effect are so miniscule that they either don't care or they have found ways to adapt. A riskier plan would be to argue that the Russian's would or have found ways to subvert the sanctions anyway so they are of no consequence which would also go to prove that the sanctions have no effect anyway and should be removed. You could also argue that the sanctions system has Russia's support and thus there is no worry about a confrontation over the ramifications of sanctions as they are part of the system and any harm is partially their fault. On the con, you would want to argue hard core isolation. The side effect of sanctions being the isolation and deterrence to Russia is good for the world as it reduces the number of hostile forces seeking a sphere of influence in the Western hemisphere to one less and potentially limits their expansion to other parts of the world as a whole. On this side, it will be important to shore up the argument and have blocks ready that Russia isn't subverting the sanctions now and that they aren't going to find loopholes to get around the system that has been established already. For this one, your impacts will be largely speculator. The link chain that gets from Russia economy harm to a nuclear war or confrontation is largely based on speculation and conjecture and some judges don't like this. A more successful approach would be to argue that this pushes up tensions in the region with the United States and a global power and that causes flashpoints for smaller proxy conflicts and diplomatic disputes. On this front, impacts are either very realistic and not body count based or are speculative and end with a trip into a policy debater's impact file.

Sample Evidence

Russia is using economic contacts in Latin America to establish geopolitical dominance and challenge U.S. hegemony

Blank, 10 --- Research Professor of National Security Affairs Strategic Studies Institute U.S. Army War College (4/13/2010, Stephen J., "Russia and Latin America: Motives and Consequences," https://umshare.miami.edu/web/wda/hemisphericpolicy/Blank_miamirusssia_04-13-10.pdf,)

However, none of the expanding economic ties should disguise Moscow's fundamentally geostrategic orientation. Medvedev wants the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) to bring about a genuine multipolarity and weaken U.S. hegemony in international financial institutions and the global economic order.⁵⁴ He and Argentina's President Cristina Kirchner advocated reforming international financial institutions, a major thrust of recent Russian foreign policy, and Medvedev urged Argentina to recognize Russia as a market economy.⁵⁵ Medvedev and subordinate officials have also urged Brazil to coordinate foreign policy with Russia to foster the multipolar world.⁵⁶ Indeed, in 2006, then-Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov openly admitted that successful business contacts are crucial to Russia's geopolitical cooperation with other governments when he said, "I would not set higher targets for geopolitical relations without making a success in the economy first."⁵⁷ Similarly, Medvedev conceded that his own trip to Latin America was prompted by serious geopolitical reasons.⁵⁸ Venezuela and Cuba The dominance of geopolitics emerges quite strongly in Russian foreign policy towards its main partners in Latin America, Venezuela and Cuba. Russia's interests are fundamentally geostrategic, not economic, and no Latin economy save perhaps Brazil can offer Russia much tangible benefit. Therefore, geopolitical and strategic aims outweigh economic interaction with these states. For example, the BBC reported that Patrushev told Ecuador's government that Russia wanted to collaborate with its intelligence agency, "to expand Moscow's influence in Latin America."⁵⁹ Moscow also signed an agreement to sell Ecuador weapons.⁶⁰ Most probably Russia wants to link Ecuador and Venezuela with Russian weapons and intelligence support against Colombia. Since they are both antagonistic to Colombia, they can then support the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), threaten a U.S. ally and seek to pin Washington down in another dirty war.⁶¹ Chávez's open support of the FARC with Russian weapons strongly suggests that Moscow knows all about his efforts and approves of them. The case of Viktor Bout, the notorious arms dealer who enjoys protection from Russia's government, reinforces this analysis. In 2008 Bout was arrested in Thailand for offering to deliver weapons to the FARC as part of a sting organized by the United States. It may not be coincidental that Bout's offers coincide with Russian support for Chávez's latest clash with Colombia.⁶² Once Bout was arrested and obliged to undergo an extradition hearing, Moscow brought immense pressure to bear upon Bangkok so that he would not be extradited to the United States and forced to name names, dates, places and people.⁶³ Undoubtedly, Moscow also fully recognizes Chávez's conversion of Venezuela into a critical transshipment center for narcotics from both Latin America and West Africa, his support for insurgencies and terrorists throughout Latin America and his expansionist and revolutionary dreams about Colombia, and seeks to exploit those factors for its own anti-American purposes.⁶⁴ Therefore one must treat reports of actual

or forthcoming Russian agreements with Nicaragua and Venezuela on counter-drug cooperation with great wariness, as they could be smokescreens for Moscow's conscious support for drug running into America, Europe and Latin America.⁶⁵ Indeed, reports from 2003 point to Russian criminal penetration of Mexico's narcotics gangs.⁶⁶ More recently, in early 2009, a Russian and a Cuban citizen were both arrested for drug smuggling in Yucatán.⁶⁷ Simultaneously, Russia openly wants to increase cooperation among the BRIC members' intelligence services and Latin America in general. Clearly Moscow wants to establish permanent roots in Latin America and use those contacts as bases for political influence to support those states and potential insurgent movements against the United States. ⁶⁸ These are only some of the reasons why Moscow's arms sales to Venezuela, and projected sales to Cuba, are perhaps the only truly dangerous aspects of its policies in Latin America. These sales aim to give Chávez much of what he needs to foment his Bolivarian Revolution throughout Latin America, since Chávez is running or selling weapons to insurgents and left-wing regimes all over the region, and second, because these weapons make no sense unless he is planning an arms race in Latin America. Chilean, Colombian and especially Brazilian reports all raise the alarm about the \$5.4 billion in Russian arms sales to Venezuela. These reports raise the specter of Venezuela "detonating" a continental arms race, acquiring the largest Latin American fleet due to its purchase of submarines, the comprehensive arming of Venezuela's army, fleet and air forces with huge arms purchases, and the acquisition of hundreds of thousands of Kalashnikovs, and an ammunition factory. These reports also point out that since 2003, if not earlier, these automatic rifles and ammunition have migrated from Venezuela to the FARC. This causes great fear that Russian arms will underwrite armed insurgencies and drug running (submarines being excellently equipped for that purpose, as well as to defend Venezuela's coastline from nonexistent threats).⁶⁹ The sheer scale of ongoing Russian arms sales to Venezuela since 2004 justifies these alarms, as they make no strategic sense given the absence of any U.S. or other military threat. Even Chávez knows this, for he claims that the air defense missiles he ordered are meant to protect oil derricks!⁷⁰ Therefore there are purposes beyond the legitimate defense of Venezuela for these weapons. Moscow has sold Venezuela \$5.4 billion in weapons since 2004. Those systems include 24 Su-30 fighters, 100,000 Kalashnikov AK-47 rifles, Ak-103 assault rifles, BMP-3 infantry fighting vehicles. Venezuela also bought 53 Mi-17V-s and Mi-35M helicopters. In addition, Russia has helped develop factories in Venezuela that can make parts for the rifles, their ammunition and the fighters, with an announced goal of producing 50,000 rifles a year. Venezuela plans to buy 12 Il-76 and Il-78 tankers and cargo aircraft, or possibly 96-300 military transport planes, Tor-M1 anti-air missiles, a fifth generation anti-air system equally effective against planes, helicopters, UAVs, cruise missiles and high precision missiles, and Igla-S portable SAM systems. In September 2009, Moscow advanced Caracas a \$2 billion credit to buy more arms: ⁹² T-72 main battle tanks, Smerch rocket artillery systems, and the Antey 2500 anti-ballistic missile system.⁷¹ Other Russian defense sources said that the tank deal could be expanded to include three diesel-powered submarines "Kilo" class, combat helicopters Mi-28 and armored infantry vehicles BMP-3.⁷² Venezuela also seeks Mi-28n Hunter high-attack helicopters and is discussing the possible purchase of submarines.⁷³ There were also earlier discussions about selling project 636 submarines (among the quietest subs in the world) to Venezuela during 2011-13, along with torpedo and missile ordnance for Venezuela's navy. The \$2.2 billion loan in 2009 will go for 92 T-70 and T-72 tanks, BMP-3 Infantry Fighting Vehicles, Smerch anti-tank missiles, multiple rocket launchers, S-300, Buk M-2 and Pechora anti-aircraft missiles, all systems usable against Colombia. In return, Russia got access to join Venezuela's national oil company, Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA), in exploring oil fields in the Orinoco River basin.⁷⁴ The signed agreements make it clear that each of the three Russian companies has staked its

own bloc in the Orinoco oil belt. Thus, LUKOIL has received permission to explore the Junin-3 block. In effect, it has extended its three-year-long contract with PDSVA on the block's evaluation and certification. The new two-year agreement provides for the bloc's joint exploration and development. Once accomplished, the two companies plan to establish a joint venture to develop the deposit. This will require billions of dollars in investment. The oil from this project could then be sent to an oil refinery in Italy. LUKOIL has just bought 49.9% of its shares. TNK-BP and PDSVA signed an agreement on the joint study of the Ayacucho-2 block in the wake of a framework memo signed last October. As with the LUKOIL agreement, it provides for a second phase - the sale of the produced oil abroad.⁷⁵ Venezuela's arms purchases make no sense unless they are intended for purposes of helping the FARC and other similar groups, fighting Colombia, projecting power throughout Latin America, drug running with subs that are protected against air attacks, or providing a temporary base for Russian naval and air forces where they can be sheltered from attacks but threaten North or South America.⁷⁶ Since Putin has said that permanent bases in Cuba and Venezuela are unnecessary, this leaves the door open to temporary bases, including submarine bases as needed.⁷⁷ Recently Bolivia, too, has offered its territory as a base in return for arms sales and economic help on energy and other projects.⁷⁸ Much of what Russia sells to Venezuela is compatible with that idea, as is Putin's call for restoring Russia's position in Cuba and ongoing talks between Russian and Cuban military officials (e.g., Sechin's trips in 2008).⁷⁹ The following facts are also particularly noteworthy. Chávez is not only arming the FARC; he is also training other Latin American states' military forces (e.g., Bolivian forces).⁸⁰ Venezuela aided Iranian missile sales to Syria, Chávez told Iranian leaders about his desire to introduce "nuclear elements into Venezuela," (i.e., nuclear weapons) and Russia supports the allegedly peaceful Venezuelan development of nuclear energy and explorations for finding uranium and an alternative nuclear fuel, thorium.⁸¹ Iran is now actively helping Venezuela explore for uranium.⁸² These developments suggest the possibility of Venezuela functioning as a kind of swing man or pivot for a Russo-Venezuelan-Iranian alliance against the United States. Certainly elements in the Iranian press and government believe that Tehran should further intensify its already extensive efforts here to create the possibility of a "second front" in political or even in military terms against the United States. Hizbollah already raises money and runs drugs in Latin America and many have noted the growing network of ties between Iran and Latin American insurgents and terrorists facilitated by Chávez.⁸³

In particular, Russia uses oil investments to secure military ties to contain the U.S.

Farah, 13 --- veteran newsman and founder of WorldNetDaily.com (3/3/2013, Joseph, "Russia-China standoff in Venezuela; Both eye oil reserves as they compete for influence," www.wnd.com/2013/03/russia-china-standoff-in-venezuela/)

WASHINGTON – As Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez remains gravely ill and may die soon, Russia and China are weighing their future in the country where they have billions of dollars in oil investments, according to report from Joseph Farah's G2 Bulletin. In an effort to secure a position for the future, Russian President Vladimir Putin sent close former KGB associate Igor Sechin to Venezuela to discuss with Venezuelan Vice President Nicolas Maduro future bilateral relations. Sechin has been handling

Latin American issues for years. He also happens to be the executive chairman of the Russian oil conglomerate Rosneft. Sechin and Maduro finalized a number of agreements that help assure Russia's future position in Venezuela and keeps pace with China, which has loaned billions of dollars to the Chavez government to help ensure security of its own oil investments in the country. Both countries are in the process of helping develop Venezuela's oil reserves, said to be the largest in the world at an estimated 296 billion barrels. Regional sources say that Sechin negotiated almost \$47 billion in investments in the Venezuelan oil sector, including agreements to set up a joint Russia-Venezuela drilling and manufacturing company and to permit increased Russian access to offshore oil reserves. However, both countries also have an ulterior strategic reason for maintaining their position in Venezuela, and that is having a base from which to watch and undertake a containment approach toward the United States **Russia is using its investments as a way to obtain more bases for its navy.** In 2008, Russia sent in long-range bombers and a naval squadron to Venezuela. While it hasn't done a repeat of these deployments, **Russia wants permanent basing rights in Venezuela.** Russia also has expanded its arms sales to Venezuela, including more than 100,000 Kalashnikov rifles, Mi-35 helicopters, Su-30 jet fighters, air defense systems, tanks and armored vehicles. If Chavez dies, there is a question as to what extent a new leader will be as friendly to both Russia and China. Any new leadership probably will continue working with them but could be friendlier to the United States, unlike the Chavez regime, according to informed sources. In turn, this could create a climate for further American investment which the Russians would then find competitive with their own interests.

Venezuela uses its oil revenues from the US to purchase Russian arms

Suchlicki 12 – Director of the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies, University of Miami (August 5, 2012, "Venezuela- Iran- Iran's influence in Venezuela: Washington should worry" <http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/08/05/2930050/irans-influence-in-venezuela-washington.html>)

<Chávez is also using Venezuela's oil wealth for other purposes. Chávez' support for Cuba exceeds \$7 billion per year in subsidized petroleum shipments and investments in Cuba's oil infrastructure. The Venezuelan regime supports a variety of leftist, anti-American regimes in Latin America including Nicaragua, Bolivia and Ecuador. And Chávez has spent more than \$6 billion in purchasing Russian weapons, creating a long term Venezuelan dependency on the Russian military. Venezuela remains an open back door for Cuba's acquisition of sophisticated Russian weapons.

Emboldened by Venezuela's vast oil resources and his close relationship with Iran and Russia, Chávez has laid claim to the leadership of the anti-American movement in the region. The collapse of the Soviet Union, Fidel Castro's illness and Cuba's weak economy thrust the leadership of Latin America's left onto Chávez. If Fidel was the godfather of revolutionary/terrorist/anti-American groups, Chávez is the trusted "capo."

The Venezuelan leader has manipulated past elections, and will manipulate future ones. He is increasingly deepening his Bolivarian revolution by weakening and subverting Venezuela's democratic institutions. At best, Venezuela's weapons purchases from Russia are leading to a major arms race in the

region, with Colombia acquiring U.S. weapons and Brazil turning to France. Other countries, such as Ecuador and Peru, are also spending their much-needed resources in the acquisition of weapons. A coalition of Venezuela and its allies, Cuba, Ecuador, Bolivia and Nicaragua, may develop into a club of well-armed, anti-American regimes exercising influence in the region by intimidating its neighbors.>

The Russian are finding ways to subvert the sanctions. This renders them pointless

Kurmanaev Anatoly and Krauss, Clifford. 2-8-2019, "U.S. Sanctions Are Aimed at Venezuela's Oil. Its Citizens May Suffer First.,"NYT, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/08/world/americas/venezuela-sanctions-maduro.html>

CARACAS, Venezuela — When President Trump slapped surprise oil sanctions on Venezuela aimed at toppling President Nicolás Maduro, exports plunged and banking froze as the effects hit harder and faster than expected.

But in recent days it has become clear that Venezuela's state oil company, the main target of the sanctions as Mr. Maduro's bankroller, has found a few ways to survive, with some Russian help.

Many in Venezuela fear that the sanctions imposed last week will push the already suffering nation of about 30 million people into an even greater humanitarian catastrophe.

"I'm not sure the U.S. has a Plan B if this doesn't work in getting rid of Maduro," said Francisco Rodríguez, a Venezuelan economist at Torino Capital, a brokerage firm. "I'm afraid that if these sanctions are implemented in their current form, we're looking at starvation."

A refinery complex owned by Venezuela's state-run oil company, Petróleos de Venezuela, or Pdvsa. The company is surviving, for now, with some Russian help. Credit...Meridith Kohut for The New York Times

Venezuelan oil exports to the United States, which provide the biggest source of cash for Mr. Maduro's government, plummeted 40 percent last week. Customers suspended contracts, banks suspended Venezuelan accounts, and a dozen tankers filled with Venezuelan crude sat stranded across the Caribbean.

"We can't charge, we can't receive money. Our finances are paralyzed," said Reinaldo Quintero, head of the Venezuelan Oil Chamber, an industry group that represents the country's 500 biggest oil service companies. "There will be major collateral damage."

But crucial help came from Venezuela's biggest oil investor, Russia's state-run Rosneft. The company said in a presentation this week that it would increase its output in Venezuela this year despite the sanctions, and that it remained committed to the country, throwing a lifeline to Mr. Maduro's government.

Venezuela's economy has already shrunk by about half since Mr. Maduro came to power in 2013, causing millions of people to flee the country or skip meals to survive.

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Washington Post, 1-29-2019, "Russia slams U.S. sanctions on Venezuela and promises to back Maduro," https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/russia-slams-us-sanctions-on-venezuela-and-vows-to-back-maduro/2019/01/29/71eb5fe4-23be-11e9-ad53-824486280311_story.html

Oil (China and Saudi Arabia Specific)

Outside of Russia, Saudi Arabia is my next favorite geopolitical country and based on the number of times we debate it, China is a close third. I chose to keep these points tougher and separate from the Russian oil discussion because they are different and nuanced in how you'd run them.

China and Saudi Arabia are some of the world's largest oil producers behind the United States, Venezuela, Iran and Russia. Two of those nations we have taken care of with sanctions and effectively eliminated them from the market. Looking at the implications, we see a standard issue of supply vs demand and price curve. In simple terms, as we limit the supply of a natural resource or good, but we keep the demand the same or we increase demand for that resource, we see a price increase. This is good for the people that remain in the market with supply left to sell. Take for instance the game of Oregon Trail. As you moved from Independence Missouri to the West, you stopped at forts and trading posts along the way. As you got farther from home, you found that the stores still sold the basic goods you could get in Missouri, but you had to pay higher and higher prices. A wagon yoke might cost \$10 in Independence but \$30 in at Fort Bridger.

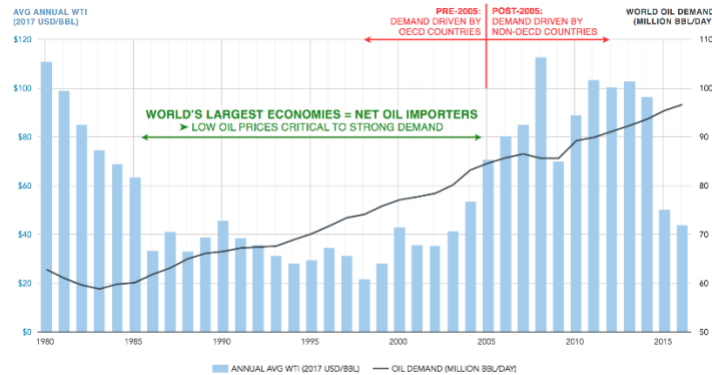
In much the same way, as Venezuela was cut off from the world's major oil markets by US sanctions, we see a steady price in prices overall across the globe. The first chart below shows the decline in oil production in Venezuela as it relates to the price per barrel for oil. There is a correlate to the drop in production and the rise of prices on a whole.



<https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2019/09/16/the-drone-strikes-in-saudi-arabia-spook-oil-markets>

Next, we look at the worldwide global oil price chart. Although at first it might seem counterintuitive to the point to use this chart as it shows that oil price is down from historic highs, it shows two key features that negate this. First is that demand is up across the board for the world. Second is that the graph doesn't explain the geopolitical implications of why price is

low. The fill-in is due to Saudi Arabia and China using their full-scale production facilities to fill in the gap. So, although the price is lower than all time highs, they are the ones making the profit.



<https://www.oilsandsmagazine.com/market-insights/oil-prices-explained-how-to-value-a-barrel-of-crude>

So, we get to implications of this. On the China front, a larger Chinese economy means that China has more capital to invest in their industrial sector and military. This means a modernization in the very thing that the US has hoped to stifle for years as it poses a threat to our sphere in East Asia. A strong China might get ambitions to expand into other areas like Africa or even the South China Sea (you all knew that I couldn't go one topic without bringing this up.) In terms of Saudi Arabia, a growing economy means more funding for a nation that has ties to radical extremist groups that have stated a desire to harm the United States. It also means funding an empire that has openly flaunted human rights by harming freedom of speech, assembly, women's rights, and the killing of US citizens without regard to punishment.

On the pro, you would want to argue that removal of sanctions would open the gates to more Venezuelan oil being pumped into the market. You would need to win that this would cause a shock to the system and lower prices or drive China and Saudi Arabia out of the market or at least limit their economic growth in the oil field. You would also need to win that currently; China or Saudi Arabia is the beneficiary of the sanctions. The impact scenarios on this one is realistic but far from having body counts, so you will need to win the impact to counterbalancing. If you go China, expansion is a good impact as it leads to confrontation over areas like the South China Sea or other regions in East Asia. If you go Saudi Arabia, funding of terrorist groups and the harm to the world is a good impact. ON the con, you will need to argue that the price shift is caused by US shale oil being bought and sold on the market and that China and Saudi Arabia are not the benefactors of a huge economic boom. You could also try to cut the link chain and argue that the impact scenarios are false and that this tug of war over oil profits has been going on for years and we have seen no impacts that the pro has stated yet. In this case, you are essentially forcing them to debate the brink. Above all, remember to keep the

link chains short and believable as these arguments can get large and extended fast and judges are likely to shut down if it gets into an extended link debate that is just unbelievable.

Sample Evidence

US sanctions open the way for China to expand their sphere of influence to South America

Sanchez 5/4/13 staff writer for Associated Press (Fabiola Sanchez, 4 May 2013, "Outlook Grim in Venezuela's Essential Oil Industry," ABC news, <http://abcnews.go.com/m/story?id=19108842>)//

Ramirez said that PDVSA's efforts remained focused on developing the remote Orinoco belt, site of the world's biggest oil reserves, with the aid of oil firms from China, Russia, the U.S., Italy, Vietnam, Malaysia, Japan and Spain. Venezuela hopes to lift overall production to some 3.32 million barrels a day, 200,000 more than last year. "We're in a process of trying to attract investment in dollars other than ours," Ramirez said, assuring reporters that PDVSA would work with private investors to not take on more debt to make new investment. Outside experts, however, are deeply skeptical. They say PDVSA is badly mismanaged and that even a radical overhaul would take years to show results.

Venezuela will turn to China to make up sales lost to sanctions

Tissot 12 Independent business consultant specializing in South America and founder of Tissot Associates, former Director of Latin America at PFC Energy (Roger Tissot, 1 June 2013, "Why the health of Hugo Chavez matters to Alberta's oil sands," Alberta Oil Magazine, <http://www.albertaoilmagazine.com/2012/06/hugo-chavez-is-losing-his-hold-on-power-in-venezuela-should-albertas-oil-and-gas-sector-be-worried/>)//

It's important to point out that any efforts to revive a "technocratic" PDVSA may face some political realities. Chavez's meddling in petroleum matters caused many of Venezuela's best and brightest petroleum minds to leave the country. The expertise lost is now leading an oil boom in Colombia; and one would doubt that after being successful in the private sector, former employees would want to return to a "government job". As difficult as the situation is, there are reasons to believe the period of production decline in Venezuela is over. In fact, realizing its huge financial burden and numerous operational challenges, PDVSA seems willing to assign more resources to capital development. Central to the reversal of production is the US\$2-billion "Tri-color" investment plan in the Orinoco belt, aimed at boosting production there to 1.6 million bpd by the end of the year. Secondly, PDVSA appears to be asking its partners to help finance its share of their joint ventures. Large companies such as Chevron and the China National Petroleum Corporation seem willing to accept the request in exchange for better governance in the joint ventures. However, the question remains if Capriles, Chavez or a Chavista successor would have the vision and capabilities to further open up the sector, improving contractual terms and offering a concession model that would bring back the capital and competition necessary to finally meet its old goal of doubling current production by the time the next presidential elections take place. If that were the case, Venezuela, free of ideological hobbles, could focus on regaining market share in its most profitable market, the U.S. Gulf of Mexico – the main target of Alberta oil producers.

Oil sales and profits are key to a new Saudi Arabian economy and their expansion into the 2020's

Jawadi 2019, Professor of Finance (Professeur des Universités) at the University of Lille (France), "Oil Price Collapse And Challenges To Economic Transformation Of Saudi Arabia: A Time-Series Analysis", Energy Economics Volume 80, May 2019, Pages 12-19, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140988318304857>

Accordingly, Saudi Arabia's considerable oil exporting capacity has given it two major benefits. First, as the world's leading oil producer, it plays a key economic and political role in the Middle East. Second, oil production has provided it with considerable wealth that has supported the country's public finances and economic growth for many years. Oil production yielded \$150 billion in 2015, representing 23% of its GDP. Oil exports provide Saudi Arabia with a positive trade balance (\$184 billion in 2014 and \$47.3 billion in 2015). Oil production has sustained economic growth, not only in Saudi Arabia (about 3.5% growth rate in 2014 and 3.3% in 2015)² but also across the whole GCC region (5% growth rate in 2016)³. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia's oil exports have helped it to develop strong trade relationships with the United Arab Emirates, China, India, Singapore, Egypt, and other countries. While oil production does have a positive effect on the real economy in Saudi Arabia, the flip side is that it makes Saudi very dependent on its oil sector. With a lack of economic diversification in Saudi Arabia and the high crude oil price volatility over the last decade, the question arises: how would Saudi Arabia's GDP react if oil prices collapsed and how would Saudi Arabia's economy transform itself as it is expected to do so with the on-going development program called Saudi 2030? From a theoretical point of view, this transformation is required, since Saudi Arabia's marked specialization in oil production also brings with it some severe drawbacks to its economy. The strong dependence on oil production and energy sector has stifled job creation in other sectors, leading to a high youth unemployment rate⁴. For instance, the oil industry (dominated by oil extraction activities) represents 45% of GDP, while services represent 50% of GDP. Oil exports account for 90% of total exports and 80% of government income. Consequently, the excessive oil price volatility caused by demand shocks and/or overall geopolitical instability and tensions has always had a negative impact on the economy in Saudi Arabia, but that has always varied over time. Oil price volatility and uncertainty is also affected by the relative uncertainty of coordination among oil producers regarding oil production quotas. For illustration, from Figure 1, it appears that oil prices have shown episodic high volatility since the 1980s. While the oil price dynamics between 1988 and 2000 appears to be relatively stable, the oil price dynamics saw more volatility in the aftermath of 2000. Indeed, from 2000 to 2008, oil prices have shown an unprecedented increase from \$25 per barrel to \$150 per barrel. These movements in oil prices can be explained by the oil production cuts by the OPEC with a simultaneous increase in oil demand from emerging economies. However, this spike was stemmed by the global financial crisis in 2008 that dampened oil demand pushing oil price to \$40 per barrel. With the first signs of economic recovery, the crude oil price moved up to \$100 per barrel and then to \$125 in 2014. However, oil prices abruptly fell in the fourth quarter of 2014 because of excess oil supply. In June 2014, oil price reached a level of \$112 per barrel and in December 2014, to \$59. This drop in oil price is associated with the slow Chinese economic growth that implied a lower oil demand from India and Brazil as well. Further, the shale oil revolution in the USA and Canada implied a sharp reduction in their oil imports and produced a downward pressure on oil prices. Indeed, as suggested by James Hamilton in Jawadi (2018), the shale oil revolution in the US has affected overall oil prices, and, by extension, the relationship between oil price and the economy of the Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia, can endure low oil prices for a long time and can possibly even push the USA and Canada to stop their costly oil production methods. It is worthwhile to make two important observations. First, the excessive volatility in crude oil price has been induced by different factors: i) the slowdown in global economic growth, ii) the slowdown in Chinese oil demand (economic growth in China went from 7.4% in 2014 to 6.9% in 2015, its lowest level since 1990), iii) the downturn in the industrial sector, iv) Saudi Arabia's strategy to compete with the US shale price, v) the refusal of other oil exporting countries to reduce their production, and vi) the shale oil revolution. Second, the decline in oil production has significantly impacted Saudi Arabian economy. Indeed, the decrease in oil prices since 2014 has reduced the GDP by \$100 billion (about 13%)⁵. Additionally, following the oil slump, the Saudi Arabian stock market lost 10.7% by mid-2014 and public deficit reached 16% of GDP by 2015. According to the International Monetary Fund, to rebalance this deficit, oil price needs to be \$80 per barrel, while the US shale oil production has pushed the price of a barrel toward \$50. To deal with the effect of oil prices on the real economy of Saudi Arabia, one direct measure adopted was to reduce oil production from 7.2 million barrels/day in 2016 to 6.6 million barrels/day in 2017. However, there is certainly no guarantee that this measure would be successful. It could also be partially successful given the uncertainty of reaching a consensus with the other OPEC countries on oil production volumes. For this reason, Saudi Arabia has recently introduced a new, long-term reform and transformation program, set out in the Vision 2030 project. The Vision 2030 program involves a series of reforms and transformations. First, the program stipulates diversification of the Saudi economy to reduce the Kingdom's dependence on the oil industry. Accordingly, the program aims to create a more diversified and sustainable economy that offers economic opportunities to entrepreneurs, creates job opportunities, and fights unemployment. Second, Vision 2030 defines new legislation that restructures and regulates the economic and accounting systems to improve the business environment (i.e. building an efficient and transparent accounting system) while benefiting from the Kingdom's strategic location. It also applies the Islamic principle of moderation. Indeed, the Vision 2030 program aims at converting Saudi Arabia into a global hub, connecting Asia, Europe, and Africa, to lead investments in the Middle East region. Third, the Vision 2030 program stipulates the privatization of some government services and the creation of a range of digital services to improve the service qualities and make them more efficient and responsible. The program is also expected to transform the public investment fund into a sovereign wealth fund. All these changes would also help improve the Kingdom's tourist appeal. Tourism is another sector that could be a major source of income for the country. At present, millions of tourists visit Saudi Arabia annually, especially because of two mosques that are among the most sacred sites of Islam on Earth. These initiatives are obviously important reforms that could transform the Saudi Arabian economy. However, it is worth noting that this transformation requires other structural changes and more clearness from the normally secretive authorities as well. For example, investors might ask for more transparency regarding oil reserve estimates, production cost estimates, and management practices of Saudi Aramco. Such transparency is only feasible if the other OPEC oil producers do the same, but in practice this is unlikely. Based on the National Transformation Program and the Saudi Vision 2030, this paper empirically looks at the impact of oil price change on the Saudi economy in a nonlinear framework and explores the diversification hypothesis. To this end, this study empirically investigates the impact of oil price changes on economic growth^h. We analyze the Saudi GDP/oil price relationship and compare the reactions of the Saudi economy following an oil price shock at different stages of an economic cycle. We allow the oil-GDP relationship to be nonlinear and time-varying with regard to these phases, and we propose a new On/Off threshold model that can provide a different measure of the reaction of Saudi GDP to oil price change. Our model endogenously captures the contribution of the oil sector to economic growth for both recession regime

and growth regime. At the same time, we augment our model with other financial variables to test the diversification hypothesis of the Vision 2030 program, and we double-check the impact of oil on the Saudi economy when the economy is more diversified. This is particularly interesting as this will enable discussion on potential economic diversification solutions to improve the Saudi economy taking alternative investments into account and incorporating other economic factors. Our study has two interesting findings. First, we confirm the dependency of Saudi Arabia's economy on the crude oil sector, but we also show that oil price exhibits a threshold effect that varies depending on the regime or state of the market. Identifying these states is particularly useful for hedging the economy against a further oil collapse. Second, we show the benefit of economic transformation through the diversification option since only equity investment can boost the Saudi economy. However, it should be kept in mind that equity markets can also increase the oil price effect on the real economy. This occurs when oil income is reinvested in financial markets. Overall, these findings seem to be in line with the expectations of the national transformation program and the Saudi Vision 2030 project

Oil sales key to control of the region

Ouvriere, 6-3-2018, "The role of Saudi Arabia in the Middle East", Redline,
<https://rdln.wordpress.com/2018/06/03/the-role-of-saudi-arabia-in-the-middle-east/>

On January 4, 2013, Le Monde published the following passage from the blog of Saudi businessman Turki Faisal Al Rasheed, "The real danger for the Saudi authorities [...] is not Iran or terrorism but the aspiration toward political, social, economic and cultural reform that would lead to good governance, to development and to the eradication of scheming and corruption." A quarter of the world's oil fields are to be found in Saudi Arabia along with the lowest extraction costs. Oil is what makes the country rich, but the dependence also makes it fragile, since 90% of its budget depends on oil exports. The drop in oil prices since June 2014 has affected the country. As an indication, the price per barrel dropped from \$114 in June 2014 to less than \$30 in January 2016. During the same period, the kingdom increased its public spending. The great majority of public money is spent on arms. The Saudi monarchy now spends nearly 90 billion dollars on defense every year. They have the third largest defense budget in the world, behind the U.S. and China, but ahead of Russia. With the war in Yemen continuing, arms purchases are unlikely to diminish. According to the international organization, Human Rights Watch, the U.S. sold 7.8 billion dollars of arms to Saudi Arabia between May and September 2015. In March of the same year, the British government agreed to deliver military supplies worth 2.8 billion pounds sterling. France also has its finger in the pie: the Saudi crown is its top arms client. According to the 2016 parliamentary report on arms exports, Saudi Arabia was France's main client for the period 2006-2015, spending 12 billion euros to buy weapons from France – more than Qatar, Egypt, Brazil and India. Until now, petro-dollars from the sale of black gold have more or less bought a certain level of social peace in Saudi Arabia from top to bottom of the social scale. Some of the oil revenue has been used to guarantee the loyalty of thousands of princes in the royal family and of their clients. The "salaries" thus paid account for two billion dollars a year, i.e. 5% of the kingdom's public spending. Petrodollars have allowed Saudi Arabia to provide jobs for thousands of public servants, and to subsidize the price of gasoline, water and electricity for households. A great number of gifts are included in what petrodollars buy, cronyism being the kingdom's way of functioning. But in the slums of the capital where basic public services don't exist, there are poor people who haven't even caught a glimpse of petrodollars. Twenty percent of the Saudi population lives below the poverty line. Unemployment is a scourge that, according to the official figures, touches 12% of the working population. But other studies set this figure somewhere between 20 and 30 percent. Saudi Arabia relies on the cheap foreign labor that constitutes much of private employment. Out of 18 million workers in a population estimated at 33 million, half are immigrant workers. Due to the crisis caused by the drop in oil revenue, the authorities are having to find solutions to avoid both bankruptcy and a reaction from the population, while maintaining their public assistance policy, their arms spending, and the general financing of their foreign policy. In order to pay for the 2016 budget deficit, the kingdom resigned itself to issue bonds for the first time since 2007, borrowing 10 billion dollars from JPMorgan, HSBC and Citigroup. Mohammad bin Salman presented a plan modestly named Vision 2030. The plan consists of a number of measures that will reinforce the private sector, including partial privatization of Aramco (Arabian American Oil Company). It appears that 5% of this public oil company may have been put up for sale. This would give foreign investors control over some of the country's natural resources. The first austerity measures to hit the population have been drawn up. Employees in the public sector must now pay the totality of their gas, water and electricity bills. There was some protest over the amount of these bills during the first quarter of 2016 but it was limited to social networks. There has been talk of requiring private employers to hire only Saudi citizens and Vision 2030 plans to enact this. The implicit hunting down of immigrant workers in this policy is not new; it has already been implemented in the past, making life even more difficult for immigrants, subjecting them to fines and ill-treatment from the police. Nevertheless, the country still needs this over-exploited proletariat even if it represents a permanent danger for the wealthy. As the crisis gets worse and its consequences are felt more acutely, the population might well react. Even if the regime is a harsh dictatorship that crushes any

attempt at opposition, its use of floggings and decapitations may no longer be a deterrent. At the time of the Arab Spring revolts in other Arab countries in 2011, the previous Saudi King Abdullah set up exceptional measures – wage increases and unemployment benefits – to try and avoid revolts spreading into Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia openly supports terrorism

Al-Thani, 8-29-2018, "Opinion," Washington Post, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/global-opinions/wp/2018/08/29/the-united-arab-emirates-and-saudi-arabia-are-aiding-terrorists-in-yemen/>

The military coalition led by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia launched airstrikes this month in northern Yemen that hit a bus filled with children, killing dozens of young boys who were on a school field trip. The incident prompted outcries from the international community and drew further concerns about the war in Yemen.

At the same time we are reading about the horrific bombing that killed 44 children, new Associated Press reporting from Yemen has laid bare the fact that the UAE and Saudi Arabia have been busy cutting “secret deals with al-Qaida fighters, paying some to leave key cities and towns and letting others retreat with weapons, equipment and wads of looted cash ... hundreds more were recruited to join the coalition itself.” It is rather ironic that while working with al-Qaeda in Yemen, the UAE has been relentlessly demonizing Qatar, the American ally that hosts the largest U.S. military base in the Middle East, accusing it of supporting terrorist groups. While the UAE has been pursuing its own expansionist ambition in Yemen and the Horn of Africa at the expense of regional security, Qatar has been facilitating hundreds of missions through Al-Udeid Air Base against al-Qaeda, the Islamic State and others who threaten peace and stability in the Middle East.

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Liberal Democracy Bad?

A new section that I plan on including in future briefs is the addition of one critical argument. This comes after talking to other coaches and students who would like to see a critical argument once in a while. As anyone who knows me will attest, I'm not a fan of kritik in public forum debate. I believe that the debate events are designed differently and that there is an event for a kritik and public forum is not it. However, this does not mean that I am not a fan of critical arguments in public forum. How do I draw a distinction? In a traditional kritik debate that one might see in an LD or a policy debate round, the structure is very linear with the worldview, the link level debate, the impact level debate, and the alternative and solvency debate. The kritik is run as a competing world that is compared and contrasted with the world of the affirmative and the status quo and evaluated as such. I view the world of public forum of just having the worldview, link debate, and impact debate. Each of these would take place in a shorter and more compressed timeframe when compared to other debate events (this makes sense given the 4 minutes for constructive and a general lack of speed reading). Often, in my view, the debate on worldview and link level can be summarized by the same piece of evidence if the evidence is of high quality. In fact, in most cases, the link level debate is the world view. In essence, you would argue that an action taken by the pro or con generates a link rather than a plan text.

The argument that I have chosen to showcase for this topic is that of development/democracy. The argument states that the focus by the con to change the regime of a nation, in this case, Venezuela, is rooted in the Western concept of what is right and wrong and that our way of government is the right way and that actions that stand opposed to our way are flawed and must be eliminated as they pose a threat. This is illustrated by the fact that if you were to ask a con team what is bad about the Maduro government as it relates to the United States or what threat the Maduro government poses to the US directly, their answer will likely be to just restate an argument link chain again. The fact of the matter is that directly, a socialist government in South America likely poses no immediate threat to the United States. Based on effects, they likely do have an external threat, but directly, they exist much the same way other nations do. The fact that we sanction them over their socialist government is much the same as our actions towards other socialist and communist nations in the Cold War. Take China for instance. We sanctioned them and banned trade and travel just because of their communistic government even though they hated many of the same things about the USSR that we did too. It was only after years of negotiations and talks that we realized that the "enemy of my enemy is my friend" and we thawed relations. In the same way, we seek to push an agenda of Westernization on a nation that has its own path.

The counter to this, and the answers by the con should be to first find and read arguments that democracy promotion is good and beneficial. Larry Diamond is a popular author

on this point and links to his works will be put below to read. The argument here is that democracies are less likely to go to war or cause harm to others. Second, you would want to argue that even if Maduro and his people are allowed to choose their own path, he is committing human rights atrocities by denying his people food and medical supplies. He is also harming his citizens by means of human trafficking and an ongoing war against women and children. We would be morally responsible if we turned a blind eye to this without taking some sort of action. Finally, you want to argue that the effects of his government, whether that be via terrorism, drugs, economic collapse, Russian war, or other impacts is a threat to the United States and thus it makes deterring his government our business.

One thing to note about this is that not every judge will be keen to hear critical arguments. Read your judge. If you are at a tournament where their paradigm is posted on Tabroom, read it and get a feel for their tolerance for these arguments. If you think you are safe to run this, watch their body language to see if they are buying what you say. Always leave yourself with a door in case your critical argument isn't being bought and you need to go back to a traditional argument and voting issue to win the round. A critical argument can fit into almost any narrative and rarely should one case be entirely critical. Above all, practice with these arguments. Like any good kritik debater will tell you, it takes practice and trial and error to get good at the nuances of the argument.

Sample Evidence

A shift away from export to the US is providing resources to fight neoliberal hegemony now – reverting to an alliance with the US will allow colonialist domination.

Barra, International Development Consultant and Public Policy Analyst; Former Public Policy Advisor at UNICEF, 2010

(Ximena de la, Sacrificing Neoliberalism to Save Capitalism: Latin America Resists and Offers Answers to Crises, 2010 36: 635

Nationalization of Non-Renewable Natural Resources: in countries where the neoliberal ideology prevails there is a striving to sign FTA agreements and to privatize public goods. These countries' autonomy to defend natural resources and to benefit from their yield is severely curtailed. This constitutes an important subject in view of the region's primary export vocation. ¶ Chile in the time of Salvador Allende, in 1971, nationalized almost 100 percent of copper production, its main export product, generating such a large amount of resources that the President referred to copper as Chile's salary. The Pinochet dictatorship, although intensely neoliberal, understood the revenue generating importance of copper and kept most of it in the public sector. Moreover, when modifying the constitution in 1980, Chile attached a clause by which 10 percent of copper sales – a colossal sum – would be allocated to funding the armed forces. Post-dictatorship Concertación governments have not only failed to eliminate that clause, they have de-nationalized 74 percent of copper mining. Even though holding 35 percent of the world's copper reserves, Chile was therefore unable to limit excess offers and keep world copper prices at reasonable levels (Caputo and Galarce forthcoming). Decline in demand now exacerbates this self-inflicted crisis. In contrast with this mismanagement in Latin America, and as a way of recovering national sovereignty especially in Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela, action is gradually being undertaken to recover public control over natural resources. Tired of seeing their resources such as oil, gas and metals depleted to make transnational corporations richer, Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela have renegotiated their contracts, increased royalties and established joint companies with their individual states as main shareholders and as the only owners of the resources. Unlike the American companies, most European companies accepted the new conditions seeing that profits would still be plentiful. At the same time, these countries have increased their growth indicators – until the crisis – which has allowed for unprecedented increases in their public budgets. Larger shares of resources, so badly needed to fend off the ravages of the crises, are therefore now being kept in the region. ¶ In the case of Venezuelan oil this has allowed it to firmly position itself on the international scene, including a leadership role within OPEC. Ecuador, for its part, has legislated dominion over extraordinary crude oil revenue (unexpected except in times of bonanza), increasing control from 50 percent to 99 percent of that extra revenue. Nationalizing Latin American natural resources to benefit legitimate owners and to help support other countries in need has enormous emancipatory effects. One of the greatest of these emancipatory effects is that of providing resources to fund badly needed social transformations. In addition to making sense financially, this is also a fundamental matter of national and regional sovereignty and dignity. ¶ Conclusion Multiple crises have resulted from conscious political decisions made by global leaders holding economic and military power. These crises have been imposed on the rest of humankind. The countries better positioned to withstand these crises are those with regulated economies and fewer links to the US economy. Should the USA lose its hegemony as a consequence of the crises, others would soon emerge to take its place. There are countries ready to undertake a sub-imperial role in Latin America (Brazil) and in Asia (China) that have the capabilities to inflict considerable damage on weaker economies should they so wish. There is growing awareness that poverty and exclusion levels in Latin America prove that the prolonged hegemonic alliance with the USA has not been favorable; and that recovering sovereignty and the role of the state has become vital. And for that purpose, a development model that is totally different from neoliberal capitalism is needed. Latin America has been in the forefront of resistance to neoliberalism but the crises now pose new challenges such as the need to confront capitalism and imperialism.

Chavez's death has put Venezuela at a crossroads – it can either fully break with capitalism or fall back in line as the affirmative desires.

Socialism Today, the official magazine of England and Wales' Socialist party, April 2013

("Venezuela after the death of Hugo Chavez, Online: <http://www.socialismtoday.org/167/chavez.html>)

Following the elections in 2012, divisions were beginning to open up within the Bolivarian movement as increasing layers of workers were coming into conflict with the regime. National security laws made strikes in the public sector almost illegal. The day before Chávez died, protests over housing conditions were met by police repression. His death has checked these developments, temporarily, as the masses have unified again to defeat the right-wing in presidential elections due on 14 April. The elections are likely to result in a victory for Nicolás Maduro, Chávez's named SUCCESSOR. At this stage, the various groupings in the PSUV/Bolivarian movement have rallied together to ensure they win. Maduro, a former bus driver coming from the trade union bureaucracy, is clearly sensitive to the pressure and demands from the working class. Maduro and the Bolivarian leaders are fighting the election with an almost religious fervour, bestowing near sainthood on Chávez whose line they will continue. Maduro has even described himself as an "apostle of Chávez", recognising the demands of the workers but appealing to them and all groups to be calm for "the sake of the fatherland". On the other side, the class prejudice of the capitalists is demonstrated in their hysterical outbursts of horror at the idea of a former bus driver becoming president. Yet Maduro is also trying to appease the ruling class. His declarations have been aimed at trying to moderate the working class, speaking about the "patriotic revolution continuing". Even before Chávez died, meetings had been arranged with representatives of US imperialism. The attempts at arriving at a consensus with capitalism are certain to come into conflict with the aspirations of the working class and masses after the elections. The worsening economic scenario globally and in Venezuela is certain to result in new conflicts and struggles. Moreover, Maduro does not have the same authority or loyalty in the eyes of the masses as Chávez did. It is not excluded that, under mass pressure, Maduro could also be compelled to adopt more radical policies which encroach on capitalist interests, but this is not certain. Divisions within the Bolivarian movement will re-emerge with even greater intensity reflecting different class interests. A new chapter in Venezuela will open following the election. Now more than ever it is urgent to build independent workers' organisations to take the revolution forward with a democratic socialist programme to transform society.

Economic engagement serves as a smokescreen to put Latin America under multinational corporate control.

Palley, Schwartz Economic Growth Fellow, 2009

(Dr. Thomas, "America's exhausted paradigm: Macroeconomic causes of the financial crisis and great recession," Online: www.newamerica.net/files/Thomas_Palley_America's_Exhausted_Paradigm.pdf, p. 26-27)

The flawed model of global economic engagement broke with the old model of international trade in two ways. First, instead of having roughly balanced trade, the United States has run persistent large trade deficits. Second, instead of aiming to create a global marketplace in which U.S. companies could sell their products, its purpose was to create a global production zone in which U.S. companies could either produce or

obtain inputs from. In other words, the main purpose of international economic engagement was not to increase U.S. exports, but rather to substitute cheaper imported inputs for US domestic production and to facilitate American owned production platforms in developing countries that could export to the United States. As a result, at the bidding of corporate interests, the United States joined itself at the hip to the global economy, opening its borders to an inflow of goods and exposing its manufacturing base. This was done without safeguards to address the problems of exchange rate misalignment and systemic trade deficits, or the mercantilist policies of trading partners. NAFTA The creation of the new system took off in 1989 with the implementation of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement that established an integrated production zone between the two countries. 18 The 1994 implementation of NAFTA was the decisive next step. First, it fused Canada, the United States, and Mexico into a unified North American production zone. Second, and more importantly, it joined developed and developing economies, thereby establishing the template U.S. corporations wanted.

Spreading democracy is good it leads to better quality of life, more personal freedoms, and interdependence

Lynn-Jones 98 (Sean, March, Editor, International Security; Series Editor, Belfer Center Studies in International Security, "Why the United States Should Spread Democracy", http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/2830/why_the_united_states_should_spread_democracy.html,)

The United States should attempt to spread democracy because people generally live better lives under democratic governments. Compared to inhabitants of nondemocracies, citizens of democracies enjoy greater individual liberty, political stability, freedom from governmental violence, enhanced quality of life, and a much lower risk of suffering a famine. Skeptics will immediately ask: Why should the United States attempt to improve the lives of non-Americans? Shouldn't this country focus on its own problems and interests? There are at least three answers to these questions. First, as human beings, Americans should and do feel some obligation to improve the well-being of other human beings. The bonds of common humanity do not stop at the borders of the United States.¹⁹ To be sure, these bonds and obligations are limited by the competitive nature of the international system. In a world where the use of force remains possible, no government can afford to pursue a foreign policy based on altruism. The human race is not about to embrace a cosmopolitan moral vision in which borders and national identities become irrelevant. But there are many possibilities for action motivated by concern for individuals in other countries. In the United States, continued public concern over human rights in other countries, as well as governmental and nongovernmental efforts to relieve hunger, poverty, and suffering overseas, suggest that Americans accept some bonds of common humanity and feel some obligations to foreigners. The emergence of the so-called "CNN Effect"-the tendency for Americans to be aroused to action by television images of suffering people overseas-is further evidence that cosmopolitan ethical sentiments exist. If Americans care about improving the lives of the citizens of other countries, then the case for promoting democracy grows stronger to the extent that promoting democracy is an effective means to achieve this end. Second, Americans have a particular interest in promoting the spread of liberty. The United States was founded on the principle of securing liberty for its citizens. Its founding documents and institutions all emphasize that liberty is a core value. Among the many observers and political scientists who make this point is Samuel Huntington, who argues that America's "identity as a nation is inseparable from its commitment to liberal and democratic values."²⁰ As I argue below, one of the most important benefits of the spread of democracy-and especially of liberal democracy-is an expansion of human liberty. Given its founding principles and very identity, the United States has a large stake in advancing its core value of liberty. As Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott has argued: "The United States is uniquely and self-consciously a country founded on a set of ideas, and ideals, applicable to people everywhere. The Founding Fathers declared that all were created equal-not just those in Britain's 13 American colonies-and that to secure the 'unalienable rights' of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, people had the right to establish governments that derive 'their just powers from the consent of the governed.'"²¹ Third, improvements in the lives of individuals in other countries matter to Americans because the United States cannot insulate itself from the world. It may be a cliché to say that the

world is becoming more interdependent, but it is undeniable that changes in communications technologies, trade flows, and the environment have opened borders and created a more interconnected world. These trends give the United States a greater stake in the fate of other societies, because widespread misery abroad may create political turmoil, economic instability, refugee flows, and environmental damage that will affect Americans. As I argue below in my discussion of how promoting democracy serves U.S. interests, the spread of democracy will directly advance the national interests of the United States. The growing interconnectedness of international relations means that the United States also has an indirect stake in the well-being of those in other countries, because developments overseas can have unpredictable consequences for the United States. For these three reasons, at least, Americans should care about how the spread of democracy can improve the lives of people in other countries.

The development paradigm that exports Western values subjects peripheral peoples to violence and genocide.

Mignolo, Professor of Cultural Anthropology @ Duke U, 2000

(Walter, Local Histories/Global Designs, 115-117)

enrique Dussel, an Argentinian philosopher associated with the philosophy of liberation, has been articulating a strong countermodern argument. I quote from the beginning of his Frankfurt lectures: Modernity is, for many (for Jurgen Habermas or Charles Taylor, for example), in essentially or exclusively European phenomenon. In these lectures, I will argue that modernity is, in fact, a European phenomenon, but one constituted in dialectical relation with a non-European alterity that is its ultimate content. Modernity appears when Europe affirms itself as the "center" of a World history that it inaugurates; the "periphery" that surrounds this center is consequently part of its self-definition. The occlusion of this periphery (and of the role of Spain and Portugal in the formation of the modern world system from the late fifteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries) leads the major contemporary thinkers of the "center" into a Eurocentric fallacy in their understanding of modernity. If their understanding of the genealogy of modernity is thus partial and provincial, their attempts at a critique or defense of it are likewise unilateral and, in part, false. (Dussel [19931 1995, 65]) The construction of the idea of modernity linked to European expansion, as forged by European intellectuals, was powerful enough to last almost five hundred years. Postcolonial discourses and theories began effectively to question that hegemony, a challenge that was unthinkable (and perhaps unexpected) by those who constructed and presupposed the idea of modernity as a historical period and implicitly as the locus of enunciation—a locus of enunciation that in the name of rationality, science, and philosophy as asserted its own privilege over other forms of rationality or over what, from the perspective of modern reason, was nonrational. I would submit, consequently, that postcolonial literature and postcolonial theories are constructing a new concept of reason as differential loci of enunciation. What does "differential" mean? Differential here first means a displacement of the concept and practice of the notions of knowledge, science, theory, and understanding articulated during the modern period.⁸ Thus, Dussel's regionalization of modernity could be compared with Homi Bhabha's, both speaking from different colonial legacies (Spanish and English respectively): "Driven by the subaltern history of the margins of modernity—rather than by the failures of logocentrism—I have tried, in some small measure, in *revisé the known, to rename the postmodern from the position of the postcolonial*" (Bhabha 1994, 175; emphasis added). I find a noteworthy coincidence between Dussel and Bhabha, albeit with some significant differences in accent. The coincidence lies in the very important fact that the task of postcolonial reasoning (i.e., theorizing) is not only linked to the immediate political needs of decolonization (in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean) but also to the rereading of the paradigm of modernity in reason. This task is performed by Dussel and Bhabha in different, although complementary ways. After a detailed analysis of Kant's and Hegel's construction of the idea of enlightenment in European history, Dussel summarizes the elements that constitute the myth of modernity: (1) Modern (European) civilization understands itself as the most developed, the superior, civilization; (2) This sense of superiority obliges it, in the form of a categorical imperative, as it were, to "develop" (civilize, uplift, educate) the more primitive, barbarous, underdeveloped civilizations; (3) The path of such development should be that followed by Europe in its own development out of antiquity and the Middle Ages; (4) Where the barbarians or the primitive opposes the civilizing process, the praxis of modernity must, in the last instance, have recourse to the violence necessary to remove the obstacles to modernization; (5) This violence, which produces in many

different ways, victims, takes on an almost ritualistic character: the civilizing hero invests his victims (the colonized, the slave, the woman, the ecological destruction of the earth, etc.) with the character of being participants in a process of redemptive sacrifice; (6) from the point of view of modernity, the barbarian or primitive is in a state of guilt (for, among other things, opposing the civilizing process). This allows modernity to present itself not only as innocent but also as a force that will emancipate or redeem its victims from their guilt; (7) Given this "civilizing" and redemptive character of modernity, the suffering and sacrifices (the costs) of modernization imposed on "immature" peoples, slaves, races, the "weaker" sex, et cetera, are inevitable and necessary.

(Dussel 1993, 1995, 75) the myth of modernity is laid out by Dussel to confront alternative interpretations. While Horkheimer and Adorno, as well as postmodernist thinkers such as Lyotard, Rorty, or Vattimo, all propose a critique of reason (a violent, coercive, and genocidal reason), Dussel proposes a critique of the enlightenment's irrational moments as sacrificial myth not by negating reason but by asserting the reason of the other—that is, by identifying postcolonial reason as differential locus of enunciation. The intersection between the idea of a self-centered modernity grounded in its own appropriation of greco-Roman (classical) legacies and an emerging idea of modernity from the margins (or countermodernity) makes clear that history does not begin in Greece, and that different historical beginnings are, at the same time, anchored to diverse loci of enunciation. This simple axiom is, I submit, a fundamental one for and of postsubaltern reason. Finally, Bhabha's project in renaming the postmodern from the position of the postcolonial also finds its niche in postsubaltern reason as a differential locus of enunciation.

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Do Sanctions Work?

We have reached the apex of the brief and have finally gotten to the question that everyone wants to answer... Do economic sanctions work? For all of their impacts, geopolitical ramifications, deaths, and musings, is it all for naught or can we find some shred of success buried within? In this case, the answer is much like the ending to A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. After 7.5 million years, the main characters ask the supercomputer, Deep Thought, one final question; "What is the meaning of life?" The computer pauses for a second and says, "42." When they ask what that means, the computer responds by saying that was the best it could do with information it was given and the guidelines that it was programmed it. In much the same way, the answer to the question on whether sanctions work or not is up to the debater. I know that it sounds like a cop out, but it is true.

From a regime change standpoint, sanctions have not caused or had the dramatic effect that policy makers had hoped that they would. After a decade of sanctions, the fundamentalists still control Iran, North Korea is still under the control of the Kim family, and Saddam ruled Iraq until military force removed him from power. The threat of sanctions has failed to deter Russia in the Ukraine or stop the Serbians from their takeover of the Balkans. However, there have been successes. Sanctions likely led to the downfall of the Soviet Union or at least the civilian resentment in Eastern Europe. In South Africa, sanctions played a part in the downfall of the apartheid government. The threat of sanctions has likely forced many other nations from South Korea to Mexico to back down from hostilities and enter diplomatic negotiations.

In terms of civilian effects, the results tend to err to the negative as they dramatically affect large numbers of civilians for the worst. However, if the end goal of sanctions is to cause civil unrest and get the people in the mood to protest, the success might be flipped. This opens the door for the debate on whether sanctions really change governments or whether they further solidify the government that is already in place. There are many factors that go into the rise and fall of governments, civil unrest being one of them, and in the end, there are just as many examples of how civil unrest has led to a "rally around the flag" mentality as has it led to overthrowing of governments. In Iran, sanctions pushed civilians towards the government we hoped would fall while in Eastern Europe during the end days of communism, it drove people to rebel against the Soviets.

In terms of economics, it is clear that sanctions do have an effect on the government and the financial success of nations. The limiting factor to this tends to be how widely the sanctions are applied, by whom, and how well they are policed. For nations like North Korea who are experts at dodging UN and US sanctions, they suffer a minimal effect and still find ways to sell their coal to other nations. In Cuba, the sanctions and embargo was largely a failure due to the fact that only a few nations actually followed suit with the United States. Most nations remained open to trade and travel and thus any negative effects from the US isolation were negated. However, when you get to places like the USSR during the Cold War where there was a united front, the sanctions were more effective. Likewise, sanctions against South Africa and Iraq were more total and thus had a larger enforcement base. This however, as covered above, did not yield the same results.

So in short, how should and would you argue this? First, I think all sides need to be ready for this debate because I can see this being an issue in almost every debate round on this topic. For either side

to win this, you need to firmly pick what you think it means for sanctions to work or not to work. Pick something, some metric, some factor and stick with it. Define it as success. As Ben Franklin once said, "Sometimes winning means stopping your opponent from achieving their objectives." In this regard, winning doesn't have to mean regime change if that isn't the path or narrative your case wants to take. If you and your partner decide that your idea of winning is talking about economic success, then defend that. If you are pro and want to talk about lives lost, defend sanctions fail because of lives lost, even if in the end, the regime does change. Stand by the impact and tell that story and clearly articulate the impacts. Judges, at the end of the day, just want a clean narrative. We will reward teams that give us unique arguments to vote on and in the debate of work/not work, define what it means to "work" and keep weaving that into your story. You will be rewarded.

Sample Evidence

Sanctions are working. The government is losing money and Maduro has lost support of his government. Many do not consider him the president

Rendon, Moises. 9-3-2019, "Are Sanctions Working in Venezuela?," Center for Strategic international Studies <https://www.csis.org/analysis/are-sanctions-working-venezuela>

Mitigating the Collateral Damage of Sanctions

Sanctions are undoubtedly cutting off financing to the Maduro regime, limiting the government's ability to import food and medicine amid economic freefall. However, reversing sanctions against Maduro and giving the regime access to revenues will not fix the humanitarian crisis for three main reasons:

Although government revenues have been used in the past to bankroll social programs, Maduro's regime has neglected to provide food and medicine to the Venezuelan people. Instead, they have directly profited from these revenues, funding illicit projects and buying the loyalty of military officials. Sanctions are designed to choke off these earnings, weakening Maduro's grasp on power and therefore accelerating the restoration of democracy.

According to the Venezuelan constitution, Maduro has not been the legitimate president of the country since January 10th, 2019. Over 50 countries have denounced his regime and recognized Juan Guaidó as interim president until free and fair elections can be held. Granting financial access to Maduro only serves to undermine calls for free and fair elections. Instead, the legitimate government of Venezuela should be given authority over the nation's resources and institutions.

Alternative approaches to the humanitarian crisis can more effectively relieve the suffering of Venezuelans without empowering Maduro with the state's assets and resources.

Sanctions are working. The Maduro government is going broke and is desperate for money

Moises. Rendon. 9-3-2019, "Are Sanctions Working in Venezuela?," Center for Strategic international Studies <https://www.csis.org/analysis/are-sanctions-working-venezuela>

There is significant evidence of the impact of sanctions on Maduro's power. Not only have targeted economic sanctions limited his ability to finance his regime's antidemocratic activities and human rights abuses by reducing oil and illegal mining earnings, but they have also strained his inner circle. His control over state institutions and assets is slipping along with public confidence in his regime. The United States has instituted a strategy of risk; the current administration's interminable threat to impose further sanctions leaves Maduro and his accomplices unsure as to how far it will go, forcing them to fear the worst.

Most recently, sanctions have increased leverage for democratic forces within Venezuela. Maduro recently agreed to send a delegation to Barbados to reopen talks with the opposition after dialogues stalled earlier this year. The increased pressure of sanctions was a key factor in his decision to negotiate with political adversaries, as he and his inner circle are more limited than ever in their capacity to travel and engage with financial assets.

That said, there are areas for improvement in sanctions strategy. The first important step is to encourage multilateral adoption of currently targeted sanctions. Unilateral sanctions, even from the most powerful economy in the world, have limited results. In addition to incorporating allied neighbors Colombia and Brazil, the United States should take advantage of the Lima Group, which has recently taken a strong stance on Maduro's crusade against democracy. If this is successfully achieved, the strategy can be extended outward to the Organization of American States and perhaps even the United Nations (although Chinese and Russian veto power on the Security Council would make this difficult).

The United States and its allies must use sanctions deliberately as a tool to shut down Maduro's criminal activities. By closing off criminal sources of revenue for him and his cohorts in Venezuela, Maduro's relative exit costs can be lowered, which will in turn increase the likelihood of a peaceful transition. While barriers to exiting power are always high, sanctions can isolate Maduro to the point where resigning is a welcome alternative.

Another method could be the reallocation of assets recovered from sanctioned officials in the Venezuelan government and military. These assets could be forfeited to nongovernmental organizations helping the most deprived Venezuelans. While such a process requires cutting through significant red tape, the legitimate government led by Guaidó would be well served to ensure that the victims of malevolence in Venezuela are compensated in some manner.

Lastly, the international community can integrate innovative ideas for sanctioning businesses, especially those that are paramount to U.S. economic interests in the region. Several U.S. companies, most notably Chevron, currently operate in the Venezuelan oil sector and in turn must navigate sanctions. One past

example is that Citgo, a subsidiary of PdVSA, was wrested from Maduro's control and made responsive to Guaidó's administration. The same strategy could be applied to Venezuela's financial sector, specifically its centralized and semiprivate/state-owned banks. The United States should distinguish between institutions that are operating in sole service of Maduro's regime and those that can play a role in providing an economic future for the country. This will require creativity as well as flexibility. It is also necessary to retract sanctions placed on state entities once they are proven to be legitimately controlled.

Sanctions won't work because we are their largest trading partner. We still trade despite our own sanctions

Kurmanaev, Anatoly and Krauss, Clifford. 2-8-2019, "U.S. Sanctions Are Aimed at Venezuela's Oil. Its Citizens May Suffer First.,"NYT, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/08/world/americas/venezuela-sanctions-maduro.html>

The United States has remained Venezuela's main trading partner under Mr. Maduro despite his government's anti-American rhetoric, accounting for about 50 percent of the country's exports and imports.

The headquarters of Petróleos de Venezuela in Caracas. The sanctions announced by the Treasury Department banned United States companies and individuals from dealing with the oil giant, which provides about 90 percent of the country's hard currency.

The headquarters of Petróleos de Venezuela in Caracas. The sanctions announced by the Treasury Department banned United States companies and individuals from dealing with the oil giant, which provides about 90 percent of the country's hard currency. Credit...Meridith Kohut for The New York Times

Despite the rising tensions, Venezuela's elite has continued doing most of its business through the United States, using American banks and suppliers.

It was the sudden loss of the American market to Venezuelan state companies and their local suppliers that struck with such force.

"No one has been prepared for this, no one had any contingency plans or accounts in other currencies," said one Pdvsa contractor, who spoke on condition of anonymity to avoid recriminations from the company.

There is no guarantee that Pdvsa, even if it can limp along with severely reduced operations, will ever recover. Energy experts say the sanctions are tighter than what many first thought a week ago.

The Treasury Department in recent days specified that the sanctions also extend to other Venezuelan companies, barring them from using the American financial system to do business with Pdvsa.

“We’re seeing that Pdvsa’s partners are taking precautions; we’re seeing contracts being canceled,” said Risa Grais-Targow, a Latin America expert at the Eurasia Group, a political risk consulting firm in Washington.

“If Pdvsa can’t quickly find alternative export markets or they can’t blend their crude,” she said, “you get into a situation where there is nowhere for the production to go and you have to start shuttering it and that is a huge problem.”

Sanctions have the opposite effect. They lock in governments and make diplomacy a zero sum game without negotiations

Bruenig, Matt. 9-22-2019, "What the US Sanctions Against Venezuela Have Wrought," No Publication, <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2019/09/venezuela-sanctions-embargo-caracas-trump-maduro-guaido>

Sanctions carry with them many social and political implications, apart from the effects they have on the economy. Indeed, there was significant political fallout after the Trump administration made its announcement. Nicolás Maduro left the negotiating table in Barbados, which, given the timing, was likely a goal of an administration that has little faith in a negotiated end to the current crisis. And though new negotiations are in the works, the sanctions undoubtedly rolled back any progress that had been made by political actors to find some middle ground.

The sanctions highlight a larger political problem that the Trump administration’s relationship with the opposition coalition has produced. It is evident that the Trump administration’s principal interlocutor is Voluntad Popular, the party of Juan Guaidó and his mentor, Leopoldo López. Despite the fact that López is an extremely polarizing figure, considered by many to be one of the most reactionary voices of the opposition, the relationship between Voluntad Popular and Trump has begun to define the coalition’s strategies and has created an expectation of support for measures, like the sanctions, over which many in the opposition are divided.

Indeed, punitive, unilateral measures such as these tend to have a dampening effect on democratic procedures, forcing people to draw lines in the sand and rally around intransigent positions. Shortly after Washington announced the sanctions, Guaidó named a new “cabinet.” With López at the helm of the group, little room is left for discussion among leaders about what stance to take on the sanctions. Such polarizing policies ratchet up tensions, justifying the authoritarian position that, for now, there is no time for debate, discussion, and popular participation.

With each new raising of the stakes, political discourse becomes an increasingly zero-sum game. While the Guaidó-led opposition has remained silent on the suffering the sanctions will cause, some Chavista politicians have used the sanctions as means to enforce loyalty. For example, shortly after Trump signed the executive order, videos and social media messages announced that those who did not sign a

circulated document against the bloqueo could be denied CLAP boxes, an indispensable — albeit inconsistent — source of food for many in the popular sectors. And for social movements and political parties, it becomes increasingly difficult to thread the needle between criticizing sanctions and the US government while at the same time positioning themselves against the Maduro government.

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Conclusion

Foreign policy has no really clear success or failure benchmark. Often we measure the effectiveness of a policy based on a desired outcome. However, the means used to achieve the ends are just as important as the ends themselves. Too often, when considering the ends of a policy, we forget that there is a human toll that is taken. We seek to punish the wrongdoers of the world but often civilians and innocent people get caught in the crossfire. Beyond the fact that policies rarely have a 100% success rate, one must ask the question “How much is too much?” How many innocent deaths or lives set asunder are we willing to deal with before we are ready to abandon a policy? Furthermore, does abandoning a policy mean that we have tacitly surrendered to the forces that we were seeking to change? Does this show weakness in our resolve or weakness towards an enemy? Certainly, there have been times throughout history where we have backtracked on policies that we have found detrimental and costly and seen no ill effects. However, we exist in a time of renewed American power where even wrong actions are held at any costs. As the civilian deaths mount and the region continues to falter, the policymakers in Washington and in other places will be watching carefully to gauge the effects on the Maduro government.

As debaters, you too need to be watching the effects as well. The debate will hinge on two levels. The first is the impact level. You of course want to win that there is an impact either positive or negative depending on which side of the topic you are debating. The second level is the solvency level. You will need to win whether sanctions are working or whether they are not working based on the side you are debating. This criterion varies based on the narrative that you are telling. Always default to the metric that you and your partner have chosen for the debate as a gauge of what it means to win and stick with that. Because the debate exists on two planes, you really need to pay attention to both levels and use one to supplement another. For instance, this past weekend at a small local tournament, teams were winning cleanly the impact levels that sanctions have harms but losing that sanctions fail. They were able to outweigh the fact that sanctions are working and are changing the government policies because of the impact level. This can work in reverse as if you win such a dramatic impact that you can outweigh even government change, you can win as well. Obviously, as a coach, I’d rather my teams win both levels of the debate, but I would rather us take risks and chances if we need to and go for one outweighing the other if that means we can convince a judge that we should win. That is what debate is about, taking risks and chances to see what works and what doesn’t.

So far, based on a regional and bid tournament report from this past weekend, the debates are focused in a sharp tilt to the economics of sanctions. Several of the teams that earned bids at the Blake tournament were relying heavily on the argument that even targeted sanctions that focus on individuals or businesses still paralyze local economics and hinder economic growth. Impacts from this went regional to economic collapse of the region to an

increase in the arms trade via black market to drugs and human trafficking and other illegal crimes. Civilian death tolls were tied to economics as a lack of basic necessities are becoming prevalent in the nation. Elsewhere on the flow, teams had success running Russian interference and sphere expansion as well as Chinese sphere expansion and oil as impacts. The con teams that were lacking on the “sanctions are working” evidence went with a hard-line approach good justification. This is a basic argument that says that the United States needs to maintain a strong approach to foreign policy and that any backing away from our intended goals without success shows weakness to an adversary. Their impacts come from a combination of perception and psydo hegemony gained from our strong international stance. This approach also avoids the civilian death debate because they don’t care about death as the biggest impact to them is US supremacy that prevents total destruction.

There were fewer arguments that went beyond the norm this weekend. On the pro, a team was reading that sanctions limit baseball access to the Western world and that baseball from Venezuela is critical to relations with other nations and this kills sports diplomacy. For those that are unfamiliar, sports diplomacy is the idea that sports can unite the world and bring us together. In the times of the Greeks, wars were put on pause so that nations could compete in the Olympics. In the 1971’s, ping pong united the Chinese governments and the United States, and every two years, an Olympics is pretty much any time you see athletes from Iran and North Korea laughing with people from around the world. On the con, a few teams were arguing that removing sanctions weakened Trump and his foreign policy which caused him to lose the election in 2020 and that is bad because Trump is good for America. For that point it sounds like a team raided their policy team’s politics file, but my sources say that this argument won a few rounds so it must be taken seriously. I would expect as this topic gets debated more over winter break, more non-economic based arguments will spring up so be prepared to hear a new breath of arguments at the first tournaments in January.

We are back to a one-month topic rotation and most of us will be starting our national qualifier prep work very soon. If you are debating on this topic for the qualifiers, speak the truth because you can’t every go wrong with that. For everyone, good luck and have fun.

Pro Arguments At-A-Glance

ARGUMENT	TALKING POINTS	CON RESPONSES
CIVILIANS	<p>Massive amounts of civilian deaths are happening in Venezuela.</p> <p>Basic necessities are being denied to the civilians.</p> <p>This is an act of war.</p>	<p>Maduro is the cause of the deaths, not the sanctions.</p> <p>Statistics about deaths are overstated and false.</p> <p>The sanctions are targeted at the government. Maduro is the real issue.</p>
REFUGEES	<p>Sanctions cause economic harms that leads to mass migrations.</p> <p>The migrations cause an overload to the region of refugees.</p> <p>Leads to economic collapse.</p>	<p>Refugees have existed for decades. This is non unique.</p> <p>Even when Venezuela was successful, refugees existed.</p> <p>Not as bad as others state. Migration is natural</p>
HUAMN TRAFFICKING	<p>Human trafficking is made worst by sanctions.</p> <p>Our sanctions aren't deterring the current human trafficking.</p>	<p>We can't show weakness in the face of human trafficking.</p> <p>Sanctions are working, they are putting pressure on the government for change. They have implemented some changes.</p>
DRUG TRAFFICKING	<p>Drug trafficking is increasing now.</p> <p>Sanctions are ineffective.</p>	<p>Maduro's government is involved, we can't let them get away this with.</p> <p>It has worked in Columbia, it will work here. We just need time.</p>
ECONOMICS/POVERTY	<p>The sanctions are putting Venezuela into a state of economic ruin.</p> <p>They used to be one of the rising economic powers, they aren't any more.</p>	<p>Venezuela still trades internationally. They aren't being hurt.</p> <p>Lack of necessities are caused by an artificial shortage caused by the government.</p>
RUSSIA	<p>Russia is expanding their sphere of influence in the region. Sanctions only increase their power.</p> <p>Russian influence in the Western hemisphere is bad.</p>	<p>Russia supports the sanctions.</p> <p>Russia has been expanding and trading for years. No impact.</p> <p>Russia is a partner in the region.</p>
CHINA AND SAUDI ARABIA OIL	<p>Increased sanctions mean more oil trade with China and Saudi Arabia. This leads to their economic growth.</p> <p>Their growth is bad. Leads to world domination.</p>	<p>They will always be oil superpowers as long as we need oil</p> <p>US oil will counterbalance.</p> <p>China and Saudi Arabia will grow economically in other areas. Won't need oil.</p>
LIBERAL DEMOCRACIES	<p>Democracy promotion is a Western idea that we can't push on other nations.</p> <p>Must let nations chose their governments</p> <p>Demo promo fails.</p>	<p>We aren't trying to change government types just leaders.</p> <p>The people aren't choosing their government if the election was rigged.</p> <p>Demo promo is good. Stops war and other conflicts.</p>
DO SANCTIONS WORK	<p>Left blank to fill in based on round. Based on the narrative of the case.</p>	<p>Left blank to fill in based on round. Based on the narrative of the case.</p>

Con Arguments At-A-Glance

ARGUMENT	TALKING POINTS	CON RESPONSES
CIVILIANS	<p>Maduro is the cause of the government shortages. We need the sanctions to force a change.</p> <p>Civilian deaths are exaggerated. Don't believe their studies.</p>	<p>The sanctions have limited basic supplies. Read the evidence, our government is restricting access to necessities.</p> <p>40,000 civilians have died just in the county.</p>
REFUGEES	<p>Refugees are moving for lots of regions. Economics caused by Maduro is the main reason. Must remove him from power.</p> <p>Migrations has been happening for decades. Non unique.</p>	<p>We didn't see this much migration during the economic boom during the 1990's when they were doing great.</p> <p>Refugee testimony says they left because of the sanctions and harsh economic conditions.</p>
HUAMN TRAFFICKING	<p>We are slowly changing behavior.</p> <p>Sanctions are working.</p>	<p>Sanctions are only making human trafficking worst.</p> <p>Sanctions don't stop the issue. It's been getting worst.</p>
DRUG TRAFFICKING	<p>We are slowly changing behavior.</p> <p>The government officials are involved. We can't let them get away with this.</p>	<p>We have been trying to change behavior for years, we haven't seen a change yet.</p> <p>The government officials were caught after many sanctions were already put in place. No impact to sanctions.</p>
ECONOMICS/POVERTY	<p>The government is hording money and supplies. Artificially creating the problem.</p> <p>Poverty can be solved by a government change.</p>	<p>Even if we change the government, the damage from ongoing sanctions has been done. We need action now.</p> <p>Sanctions are the real cause of the issue. Government hording and shortages are caused as a reaction to sanctions.</p>
RUSSIA	<p>Russia approves of the sanctions.</p> <p>Russia doesn't want to get involved in the West.</p> <p>Russia is not a threat.</p>	<p>Russia is defying the sanctions now.</p> <p>Russia wants to counterbalance the US now.</p> <p>Russia is undermining the sanctions.</p>
CHINA AND SAUDI ARABIA OIL	<p>They will always be oil superpowers as long as we need oil</p> <p>US oil will counterbalance.</p> <p>China and Saudi Arabia will grow economically in other areas. Won't need oil.</p>	<p>Oil is the biggest revenue maker for these nations. They need the oil.</p> <p>US oil stays local. China and Saudi Arabia goes global.</p>
LIBERAL DEMOCRACIES	<p>We aren't trying to change government types just leaders.</p> <p>The people aren't choosing their government if the election was rigged.</p> <p>Demo promo is good. Stops war and other conflicts.</p>	<p>Our intervention in other nations has led to worst situations.</p> <p>Our intervention in South America has led to worst government in other nations.</p> <p>Demo promo is bad. It leads to power vacuums,</p>
DO SANCTIONS WORK?	<p>Left blank to fill in based on round. Based on the narrative of the case.</p>	<p>Left blank to fill in based on round. Based on the narrative of the case.</p>