



11350 Random Hills Road, Suite 800, Fairfax, Virginia 22030 Phone (703) 934-6101 Fax (703) 352-3678

fff@fff.org www.fff.org

Pat Robertson Describes U.S. Foreign Policy

by Jacob G. Hornberger

Conservative Christian broadcaster Pat Robertson has stirred up a firestorm with his call for “taking out” Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez. What’s all the fuss about? All that Robertson has done is state publicly what has long been an important part of U.S. foreign policy — assassination of foreign rulers who behave independently of Washington.

[John Perkins described](#) how U.S. foreign policy works in his book [*Confessions of an Economic Hit Man: How the U.S. Uses Globalization to Cheat Poor Countries Out of Trillions*](#). In order to place foreign rulers under Washington’s thumb, the first step is to ply them with foreign loans and foreign aid, oftentimes funneled through the IMF or World Bank. While such funds are sometimes billed as “money to help the poor,” the reality is that they are nothing more than bribes to line the pockets of grateful and dependent foreign officials in return for loyalty to Washington.

Sometimes a ruler goes “independent” of Washington, refusing to follow its orders or suggestions. That brings in the State Department and the U.S. Congress, which, in the name of “promoting democracy,” starts funneling millions of dollars in U.S. taxpayer money to foreign candidates and parties who are opposing the recalcitrant ruler, with the aim of ousting him from office and replacing him with someone who is loyal to Washington.

If interference with foreign political processes doesn’t work, then the next step is an economic embargo or sanctions, whose aim is to squeeze the foreign citizenry into such misery and poverty that they will take up arms and violently overthrow their ruler and replace him with someone who is loyal to Washington. That of course has been the aim of the 40-year-old unsuccessful embargo against Cuba. It was also the aim of 12 years of [brutal sanctions](#) against Iraq, which contributed to the [the deaths](#) of hundreds of thousand of Iraqi children, again without success, after Saddam Hussein went independent after having [received WMDs and military assistance](#) from the United States in his war against Iran.

If the embargo or sanctions don’t succeed, the CIA steps in. Its job is to carry out either a coup or an assassination of the recalcitrant ruler, or both. As Perkins points out, that’s why the

Ecuadoran president Jaime Roldos and the Panamanian president Omar Torrijos were assassinated. It's also the reason for the CIA-supported coups in [Chile](#), [Guatemala](#), and [Iran](#).

Cuba's president, Fidel Castro, provides a good example of where independence of U.S. rule can get a foreign dictator in hot water with U.S. officials. While U.S. officials claim that the reason they oppose Castro is that he is a communist dictator, nothing could be further from the truth. After all, as a socialist Castro embraces Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, public schooling, income taxation, welfare, and equalization of wealth — that is, the same socialist programs that U.S. officials embrace. Castro also treats suspected terrorists the way that U.S. officials do — military tribunals, denial of due process, no independent criminal defense attorneys, no jury trials, and swift punishment. Castro even favors the war on drugs, despite its decades of failure.

So what's their real beef with Castro? Unlike his U.S.-favored predecessor, Fulgencio Batista, another brutal Cuban dictator, Castro has long kept his country independent of Washington, a cardinal sin as far as U.S. officials are concerned. If Castro had behaved with the obsequiousness toward Washington that Batista did, he would be as big a hero to the United States as, say, Pervez Musharraf, the unelected military dictator of Pakistan and former ally of the Taliban who decided to toe the official U.S. line after receiving millions of dollars in U.S. grants after 9/11.

What happens if assassination fails? That's when the Pentagon steps in, as the people of Cuba, Panama, Grenada, and Iraq have discovered. But as Robertson correctly points out, military invasions are much more expensive than assassination, in terms of both blood and treasure.

Pat Robertson has done the nation a service by bringing to the surface a reality of U.S. foreign policy that all too many Americans have preferred not to confront, a policy that has long relied on foreign bribes, interference with foreign democratic processes, coups and assassinations, and military invasions to extend the power and influence of the U.S. government overseas.

Jacob Hornberger is founder and president of The Future of Freedom Foundation.

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