

Resolution – 2014 NLG Convention

Resolution Condemning US Funding to Destabilize Progressive Governments in Latin America and throughout the World

As John F Kennedy said when he launched the Alliance for Progress and the US Agency for International Development in 1961, “economic policy is foreign policy”.

Since then, billions of US tax dollars have been sent all over the world through the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), with the stated mission of partnering with local organizations *“to end extreme poverty and to promote resilient, democratic societies, while advancing the security and prosperity of the US”*.

In Latin America, USAID and NED -- with the support of Cold War-originated human rights “monitors” such as Human Rights Watch – have, in the name of democracy and development, regularly funded efforts to promote opposition and dissension and to destabilize those very governments that have been the most effective in ***eliminating*** poverty and ***including*** working people in the political process.

The 21st Century socialist model that devolves national wealth and resources to the people, regionalizes economies in people-centered trade agreements, and includes the previously marginalized in the country’s economy and politics is anathema to the neo-liberal capitalist program and its funders, including the USAID.

USAID/NED funding of so called “civil society” organizations such as the extreme right wing SUMATE and the neo-liberal CTV union federation in Venezuela and the social media opposition recruitment project Zuzuneo in Cuba are a small sample of the misguided use of US tax dollars. Most recently, we have learned of a USAID program to recruit young Latin Americans from Peru, Costa Rica and Venezuela to stir rebellion in Cuba in the guise of giving health and HIV prevention advice.

Foreign funding of political organizations is illegal in the US and in Venezuela and particularly contrary to democratic principals when the intent is to destabilize the very governments that have been the most successful in this hemisphere in eliminating poverty and including marginalized members of society in their economy and politics.

WHEREAS, the NLG has had long-standing relations with progressive movements in Latin America and has sent numerous delegations in solidarity with progressive forces in Venezuela, Cuba, El Salvador, Honduras, Colombia, Bolivia and Mexico;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the National Lawyers Guild call on US President Obama, Secretary of State Kerry and the US Congress to cease funding organizations that seek to

destabilize progressive governments that represent poor and working populations, specifically in Venezuela and Cuba and elsewhere in Latin America.

FURTHERMORE, the National Lawyers Guild, through its International Committee, resolves as well to monitor and expose US funding of opposition groups that seek to destabilize progressive governments and oppose socialist parties and programs in Latin America and throughout the world.

FURTHERMORE, the National Lawyers Guild, through its International Committee, resolves as well to oppose the Venezuela visa sanctions unilaterally announced in August by the Department of State as well as the pending Senate sanctions legislation against Venezuela that would increase funding of opposition groups by \$15 million, and to continue to work to end the US economic blockade of Cuba. Both the Venezuela sanctions legislation and the continuation of the Cuba embargo are supported and sponsored by the Congressional foreign policy leadership, allies of the very groups receiving USAID funding.

FURTHERMORE, the National Lawyers Guild further resolves to support the initiatives of the International Committee to monitor and critique reports of Human Rights Watch and other organizations that claim to promote Human Rights, and to advocate that their reports recognize the value of economic, social and cultural rights and cease their unwarranted and unbalanced attacks on progressive governments that oppose corporate and neo-liberal interests.

AND FURTHERMORE, the National Lawyers Guild, through its International Committee, resolves to educate its membership and the public about these issues.

Implementation: The NLG Task Force on the Americas the Cuba Subcommittee and the International Committee, working together, shall:

- Initiate and work in coalition with other like-minded organizations to call on US President Obama, Secretary of State Kerry and the US Congress -- through petition campaigns, letter writing campaigns, and educational campaigns ---to cease funding organizations that seek to destabilize progressive governments that represent poor and working populations, specifically in Venezuela and Cuba and elsewhere in Latin America.
- Monitor and expose US funding of opposition groups that seek to destabilize progressive governments and to oppose socialist parties and programs in Latin America and throughout the world, by conducting research and then by publishing the findings through social media, articles, speaking engagements, and the corporate media. If the International Committee wishes the NLG as a whole to issue a statement or press release it will go through regular NLG protocol.

- Work to oppose the pending sanctions legislation against Venezuela and to continue to work to repeal the Cuban blockade, both of which are supported by Congressional allies of the groups receiving USAID funding, through working in coalition with other like-minded organizations and conducting educational campaigns, lobbying, holding seminars, disseminating petitions and encouraging letter writing to legislators and other government officials.
- Monitor and critique reports of Human Rights Watch and other organizations that claim to promote Human Rights, and advocate that their reports recognize the value of economic, social and cultural rights and cease unwarranted and unbalanced attacks on progressive governments, through the various means described above.
- Educate its membership and the public about these issues, through its own listserves, its own website, writing articles, and disseminating them as described previously.

Submitted by: NLG Task Force on the Americas (Judy Somberg, Chair), the Cuba Subcommittee (Art Heitzer, Chair), and NLG International Committee (Natasha Bannan, Co-Chair)
Contact: Susan Scott (syscott@prodigy.net)

Consent: The NLG Task Force on the Americas, the NLG Cuba Subcommittee, and the NLG International Committee all consent to this resolution and to its implementation.