
THE UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS VENEZUELA DURING NICOLAS MADURO ADMINISTRATION IN 2014-2019

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Abstract

This article is to answer the reason behind the United States imposed sanctions towards Venezuela during Maduro' presidency. As for the United States is the country that has massive power in influencing other countries foreign policies related to certain issue such as political and economic matters. Its power has spread in America, Europe, and Asia countries as a form of power expansion. In the current issue, the relation between the United States and Venezuela gets into serious tension whereas the United States imposed sanctions towards Venezuela. The main focus of this paper is to analyze the reason behind the United States imposing sanctions towards Venezuela. Moreover, this paper will examine how prominent the United States power in Venezuela that can influence the country's foreign policy politically and economically.

Keywords: U.S–Venezuela relation, foreign policy, sanction, anti-socialist, democracy.

Introduction

Latin America countries such as Venezuela and Mexico are rich in oil. While the remaining countries such as Brazil, Peru, and Chile have mining mineral sources. They have prosperous natural resources, fertile land, and a stable climate which become the biggest supports for the agricultural industry. Nonetheless, the rest that only has few natural resources are likely to remain poor since the population of Latin America is mostly concentrated in coastal areas, especially in the rural area inside Latin America countries. Basically, it was influenced by the geographical condition where not all areas have good weather and land to support agriculture (Nugroho, 2016). Despite having such an abundant natural resource, the history of development in Latin America discusses the political and economic prior to Neoliberal reformation. This also suppresses the conflictual process of Neoliberal reformation implementation and its results. The first generation during the 1980s

and the early 1990s focused on macroeconomic policies proposed by Washington Consensus. On the other side, the second generation in its form tends to be more mature, democracies, amidst not hyperinflation and financial crisis (Montero, *From Democracy to Development: The Political Economy of Post-Neoliberal Reform in Latin America*, 2005).

A political transition happened in around 1980s and early 1990s. The condition of democracy in Latin America also changed into a significant change, from the authoritarian to democracy. Democratic transition in Latin America had become an electoral democracy by the voting system (Munck G. L., 2015). It is not an easy task to construct and maintain democracy. Latin America faces several social and economic problems that restrain the full development and strength of democracy in the region (Costa, 2018).

The political economy reformation in Latin America emphasizes the interplay between political and economic reformation, and how this might affect policy outcomes, motivated in part by loudly expressed concerns about the compatibility between economic reformation and the parallel rise of democratic governance. It is mainly highlighting the role played by democratic institutions in molding a new Latin America's democracies and capacity in doing reformation needed. Developments on the ground in Latin America thus reinforced developments in the academic milieu to focus investigation and policy attention on improving the quality of economic policymaking, building the competitive efficiency of Latin America's market economies, and adjusting policy recommendations to the unique conditions of each country. (Starr, 2009).

In 2014, the United States Congress under Obama administration had released a statement about the new sanction towards Maduro related to the Human Rights issue in Venezuela. The sanction that has been approved by the Senate will target the officials involved in a violent crackdown on pro-democracy protesters. The protesters have voiced their opinion about the abuse of regime. The United States decides to deny their visas, block the properties, and freeze the assets in the United States (Kelemen, 2014). On 9th March 2015, Obama released an executive order to execute sanction towards Venezuela's military members and intelligence services. This sanction was formed based on the Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014, regarding the violence crackdown towards protesters (Chappell, 2015).

On May 2018 President Donald Trump disallowed any transaction related to the purchased of Venezuelan debt, including account receivable and the debt that owed Venezuela to pledge as collateral. This policy is intended for the corrupt officials. On November 1st Trump released E.O. 13850, to assign the forth a framework to block the assets of, and disallow a corrupt official to any particular transaction (Sullivan M. P., 2018)

The history of diplomatic tension between the United States and Venezuela began since the era of Chavez related to the issue of the nationalization of all foreign firms owned by the United States. It has culminated by the expel of the ambassador of the United States after being accused of meddling the internal affairs of Venezuela.

The usage of role shows the tendency of every state has a behavior identity to interact with each other in the international field. For instance, the classification of the role of the state of the first world, second world, and third world. From the role classification, the behavior of state can be examined in terms of how the states release their foreign policy in order to respond to a certain condition, whether become predominate, a mediator, or being dominated. The point is by examining the correlation between state's behavior (action and decision) and the state's prescription (norm and expectation) which emphasized the interaction between both concepts in order to identify the position of the state itself (Holsti K. J., 1970). This basically explain how the United States behavior as a predominant state and performing its role in Latin America, mainly in Venezuela by showing its position towards Venezuela to prove that the United States is dominant anti-socialist towards Venezuela and unconvinced on Venezuela's democracy.

The Influence of the United States in Venezuela

The behavior of the United States in the world economics and its role is significant. The United States has maintained, defended, and expanded its economic liberal to serve its national and security interest. The United States also has an ability as a system maker and privilege taker as a major power. During the Cold War, the United States has used its pattern of security in Western Europe, Western Germany, and Japan in order to support economic growth. Even after the Cold War, the United States has collaborated with many countries, including Asian countries with political agreements that can satisfy both actors involved to fulfill their national interest needs. Since the United States take a dominant position after the Cold War, the military improvement has been recognized by international. China and Russia also have the capability to compete in the international field, yet the United States still

continues its command as a dominant actor. Superpower countries certainly tend to have “system maintenance” responsibilities in which its system is an international political order or world economy. The United States has embraced with the obligations, but sometimes unconsciously not consistent even though it still can maintain a particular sector such as agriculture and textile. The United States dollar also becomes an important thing for the world economic wave since it collaborated with the International Fund in countering economic distress, such as the debt crisis of Venezuela in the 1980s, the crisis in Mexico in 1994, and the crisis in Asia in 1997-1998. It takes a prominent role in managing the flow of world economics (Mastanduno, 2008).

Related to the relation between the United States and Latin America, the United States started showing their interest in Latin America in the late 1980s, the Cold War era. At that time, the United States focused on three priorities. The first is opening markets by making agreements such as the Caribbean Basin Initiative (1983), the Andean Trade Preference Act (1991), and the North American Free Trade Act (1993). The second is strengthening democracy which began by President George Walker Bush in the adoption of Resolution 1801 in the Organization of American States in gaining support for democracy in the region. The third is stemming the wave of illegal drugs (Charlene Barshefsky and James T.Hill Chairs, 2008). Since a long time ago, the United States always shows their interest in Latin America countries including Venezuela as the country which has big reserve crude oil.

Generally, the influence of the United States in Latin America countries is broadly in matters of politics, economics, and cultures. The power to intervene in those aspects in a country such as Venezuela has really affected the dynamics of Venezuela since they have currently struggled politically and economically. Not only that, the influence of the United States makes Venezuela’s position getting worse. A couple of time since the era Obama until Trump, Venezuela has many times being imposed sanctions related to the conflict that happened. The United States also accused the President of being incapable of managing the domestic tension, which caused much separation into several parties.

The beginning of the United States diplomatic relations started in 1835 after some Latin America countries gained their independence from Spain. In 2009, the early of Obama’s administration, he met Chavez for the first time in Trinidad and Tobago in order to strengthen diplomatic relations. However, the peak of both countries relations stands out when

Venezuela was under power transition after the death of Chavez and being replaced by his vice, which is participating in a general election.

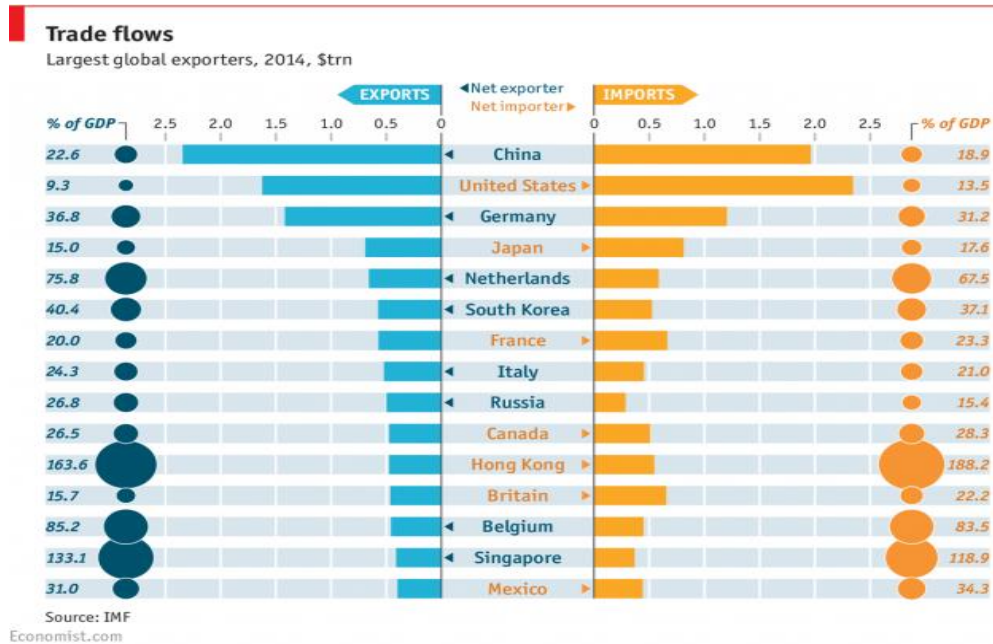
As the goal of the United States, the embassy of the United States in Venezuela becomes in charge in maintaining the relationship between both countries in cooperation and mutual understanding through the economic, promotion of commercial exchange, people-to-people ties, education, sport, arts, and cultural activity. Moreover, the governments of both the United States and Venezuela seek to improve their bilateral relationship in order to face challenges, mutual interest, and beyond. Among these are: 1.) Respect for democratic institutions and the rule of law, 2.) Respect for human rights, 3.) Reducing the transit of illicit narcotics, 4.) Promotion of shared economic prosperity, 5.) Promotion of bilateral commercial ties, 6.) Promotion of greater hemispheric integration (U.S Virtual Embassy, 2019).

In the cultural aspect, the United States also take a prominent role in matters of influencing the ideology and political values of Venezuela itself. It began when the United States intention is to expand not only the territory but also its political ideology. During the 1980s, the United States approached Latin America countries by shifting the foreign policy rather than supporting the authoritarian leaders. By promoting the liberal economic policies and showing the intention of national security towards them, the United States does not hastily directly influence them by democratic model. In 1982, President Ronald Reagan formed the National Endowment for Democracy and some associated group such as the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI). The administration wanted to combat the ideology of communism and totalitarianism that existed and promote democratic values. Some agencies such as National Endowment for Democracy and the associated group also help to promote the United States democracy. While the other agency, the U.S Agency International Development (USAID), helps to provide aid including political aid for many parts of the world. The function of USAID is to help countries transition to democracy and strengthen its democracy and to capitalize on certain parts to spread freedom and opportunity. Moreover, the USAID also established supporting body called the Office Transition Initiatives (OTI) to help to promote democracy and to assist countries transforming from authoritarianism to democracy and from violence to peace (in charge of to provide the needs as fast, flexible, and stable). The Office Transition Initiative has been operated for several years in Venezuela. The result of the role of these agencies was succeed brought Latin America leaders to promote

neoliberal economic policies as well as the foreign policy of the United States, such as President Carlos Andreas in Venezuela, President Alberto Fujimori in Peru, and President Gonzalo Sanchez in Bolivia. Even though they are committed to the policy, but inequality and unemployment remain strong that makes them become the most unstable and fragile countries among other Latin America countries and the world at the time (Gill, 2018). The role of the United States in the transition of Venezuela from authoritarian to democracy is a huge transformation for the Venezuelan political system. The United States has influenced not only economically but also politically. It means their interest has been achieved.

However, the current condition since Trump became a president is not different from the previous administration. The sanctions imposed on Venezuela remain the same and even getting worse in addition to the fact of the economic downfall that makes Venezuela struggle to run its system properly since everything needs financial support. In this matter, as a partner country that has been tied a close relation for a long time, the position of the United States seems to have been replaced by China. In 2014, in the era of Obama, economic growth did not show a significant advance. The United States focused more on the importing matter and ignored the fact that exporting is way beneficial to increase the economy. While China economic growth has increased by the support of exporting lead them to be the top of trader countries list as can be seen below.

Chart 2.1 Trade Flows



Source: The Economist

The power competition between both of the United States and China is not only in the economic sector, but also in the ideological, political, and military sector. Both countries relation is probably because of the security dilemma that happened between them. They also influential actors in Latin America, especially in Venezuela. Since Chavez nationalizing all companies that run by the United States in Venezuela, their relation became worse until today. Venezuela seems to decline the existence of economic power of the United States because many times being imposed sanctions. On February 2019, The US launched its most punishing economic action against Venezuela by sanctioning the state-owned oil giant PDVSA, which remained the main source of income for the Maduro regime. It was the hardest action ever taken against the Maduro regime and will soon block \$7 billion in assets and eliminate \$11 billion in revenues in Caracas in 2019, according to John Bolton National Security Advisor. This was because the United States wants to maintain its dominant role towards the three authoritarian countries; Cuba, China, and Russia because these countries are the supporters of Venezuela. The United States wants to see how far these countries will influence Venezuela against the States (Kempe, 2019). This action was intended due to the fact that China' power shifted the United States power's existence and shows the intention of the United States to be recognized its power in Latin America, especially in Venezuela as a

partner country even though both the United States and Venezuela were in the tension until now.

The U.S Foreign Policy Towards Venezuela: Comparison between Obama and Trump

As many countries approved that the United States is one of the superpower countries which is succeeded escaping from the struggle by gaining so much power increasing their economic and military power after experiencing the impact of World War I, World War II, and Cold War. The condition after the post-cold war, the United States has struggled with the issue of terrorism that threatens its security. Especially for developed countries, the terrorist seems interested in seeking attention by meddling the wave of political of those countries. The activities of terrorist make the United States concern about the country's stability. In rapid action, the United States announced new domestic institution, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officially in order to run anti-terrorist defense strategy and to ensure domestic violence which becomes a source of instability (Magyar, 2004). Since the United States is committed to combat terrorism, they certainly need to increase their military power as a form of defense from any violent actions that might ruin the political flow as what happened in 9/11 action, the controversial terrorist action which impacted to the social life of American people at the time because they feel threatened and unsecured.

The administration of both Obama and Trump are similar but still have a different point in leading the United States to get their interests. It can be distinguished by the way both presidents release a policy to the partner-countries in terms of bilateral relations related to the economic and political interests. The similarity between Obama and Trump lies on the way they leave all political strategies of Bush, which means they do not adopt the style of President Bush at all because they have their own.

Obama was known as president with the strategy of "The Leading from Behind." It means the United States does not need to be an aggressive country in order to put their interest to other countries. Obama has learned from Bush who makes the United States remains as interventionist by other countries by looking to the case that happened in Iraq and Afghanistan as a proof how massive the power of the United States used at the time.

Practically, the United States foreign policy has completely changed. The changing policy is not completely easy to be well implemented since it may result in some proactive and contradictive towards the policy. It always happened in each administration. The previous

administration which led by Bush, it focuses more on all matters that related to the Middle East countries. However, Obama focuses on Asia which is known as the term “Pivot to Asia.” Obama has seen the potential in Asian countries which economically developed.

Furthermore, this policy emphasizes the intention of Obama to end the policy that has been implemented in the previous administration. There are two main reasons the president changes their interest in Asian countries. The first, the power of China has been increased rapidly in terms of political and economic. The economic growth that brought China to become an influential country makes them become an aggressive country especially in spreading power in South East Asia countries. The second, to decrease the expenditure in the military aspect since the United States has spent much money to provide military, especially in a weaponry reservation to combat terrorist in Middle East countries. Meanwhile, in the Trump administration, he was known as a doctrinal leader who is capable of stimulating others in viewing certain thing. Before he was chosen as the new leader, he promised to make “America Great Again” as what he said on his campaign by emphasizing the term “American First.” He also belittles the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) existence that caused controversial respond from International forum. As the country that supports the security needs of European countries, Trump stated that the United States had spent much to cover all the needs. On the other side, the tension between President Trump and NATO became worse when another controversial issue comes up. The statement of Trump was considered humiliation because he supports the idea of disunity of European countries (Cipto, 2018).

Even though Trump’s administration has similarity with Obama’s, He once repeals the actions of Obama related to climate change foreign policy. Since both presidents have a different background, in which Obama has political background while President Trump is a businessman, obviously they have different glasses of perspective. In Obama’s administration, he was actively leading the action and combat climate change. While Trump thinks objectively with the background of a businessman and tries to repeal what Obama has done by increasing the production of oil natural gas and coal without putting the idea of protecting the environment. It was what mostly businessman does in the way of viewing profit and loss. Despite that perspective, Trump’s policies were encountered resistance from state and local governments. Even though the President is a powerful one to determine some policies, it cannot be directly approved. The United States constitutional system disseminates

power by two different branches, the federal governments, and state governments. Any new regulations must be approved by all parties (Farber, 2018).

Venezuela in Latin America Context

Venezuela in the general context of Latin America development after democratization completely changed Venezuela's political structure. In the Chavez administration, the development of democracy in Venezuela is quite slow. The performance was also poor because of the lack of basic understanding of the government related to democratic values. Only two countries that got strong support for democracy; Uruguay is about 80%, while Argentina is about 76%. Venezuela is one of the lowest rate among other Latin America countries, about 60%. Due to the low rate, the stability of democracy in Venezuela has been questioned (Whelan, 2003). This also impacted the economic situation because politics and economics are correlated and cannot be separated.

The Administration of Chavez

The performance of every country in Latin America related to economic growth, and to reduce the level of poverty becomes a crucial matter for them. The comparison between Latin America countries regarding development and democratic performance as a consequence of political and economic result shows that every country has a different style in managing their democratic performance (Munck G. L., 2009). In particular, Latin America has completely changed politically and economically after the United States democratization. After transformed into a democratic country, Venezuela faced challenging issue related to the stability of democracy.

Chavez was elected in 1998 and became president from 1999 to 2013. He was known as Bolivarian leader, and his ideology called *chavismo*. In his administration, he delivered three important purposes; to participate in a Constituent Assembly to write a constitution and improve the country, to counter poverty and social exclusion, and to eradicate corruption. Unfortunately, the promises that Chavez delivered was not in the right place. The Constituent Assembly does not run well, and the rate of corruption was increased. Even the poverty and social exclusion remain strong (Coronel, 2008).

During his administration, the president tried to eliminate the neoliberalism values and the oligarchy (the regime that is marked by the political business alliance from elite minority groups that marginalized the majority from the lower class). Neoliberal and oligarchy were established through the political pact of Puntofujism since 1958. The political pact of Puntofujism is a pact of the agreement by political elite after the military era post-independence that maintained the political and economic interests from the elite military dominant party, catholic church, and union trade which slowly marginalized the interests from the majority in Venezuela.

At this point, Chavez tried to bring Venezuela to socialism through populism politics. Populism is the political idea that does not have a specific political vision because its system was articulated into the expression of the right, middle, and left political depended on the class formation in the political arena in a certain condition. This political culture used massive political mobilization with the support of Chavez as known as a charismatic leader. Populism in Venezuela slowly became an anti-democratic movement which actualized the demands from society to be freedom movement, this movement known as Bolivarian movement. Chavez has approached the society to get their trust in leading Venezuela to be better in economic. In his oration, one of the projects that he wants to implement was economic nationalization towards oil and natural resources. The purpose of this program is to combine the power of Venezuela's oil and gas through the empowerment of the local community in each rural region, which hold the idea of self-sufficient and people based-development (Pribadi, 2016). As the writer mentioned in the first chapter, Venezuela also nationalized all the United States companies that run in Venezuela because he wanted to control foreign investment which brought both countries into tension.

The Administration of Maduro

On 2014, Maduro became the successor of previous president replacing Chavez after the president's death in 2013. During Maduro administration, the political wave is getting worse. The crackdowns happened in the early of his administration, whereas the pro-government groups called *colectivos* attacked the demonstrators. More than 12,500 demonstrations have been arrested for being involved in a riot. This crisis happened because the people were divided into two parties, the supporter of Chavez and the supporter from the current government. The government's opposition was accused of Maduro marginalized people's right for his purpose. The tension continued until 2017, where military courts prosecuted than

750 people in the name of violation of International Human Rights Law (IHRL), and it still happened in 2018 (Report, 2018).

The political crisis has happened because of the resistance from society after the electoral process escalated after Henrique Capriles Raadonski, another candidate who was lost from Maduro in 2013. It was triggered the International penalties and critics from the United States, European Union, Canada, and most Latin American countries towards Maduro regime. On the other side, since 201, Venezuela has experienced an economic downfall regarding the fall of oil prices. The lack of investment worsens the crisis that ended into a big debt payment. Trump was concerned about the debt that Venezuela cannot pay and culminate imposed a sanction (Seelke, 2018). The inability of Maduro to calm the situation brought Venezuela into critical position. The sanctions that Venezuela got since the administration of Obama is continued until the current administration of the United States lead by Trump.

Furthermore, Venezuela crisis is not only politically but also economically. The challenging issue related to economics is the hyperinflation that ruins the economic structure of the country itself. Based on a study by the opposition-controlled National Assembly, the annual inflation rate is about 1,300,000% in the 12 months to November 2018 (News, 2019).

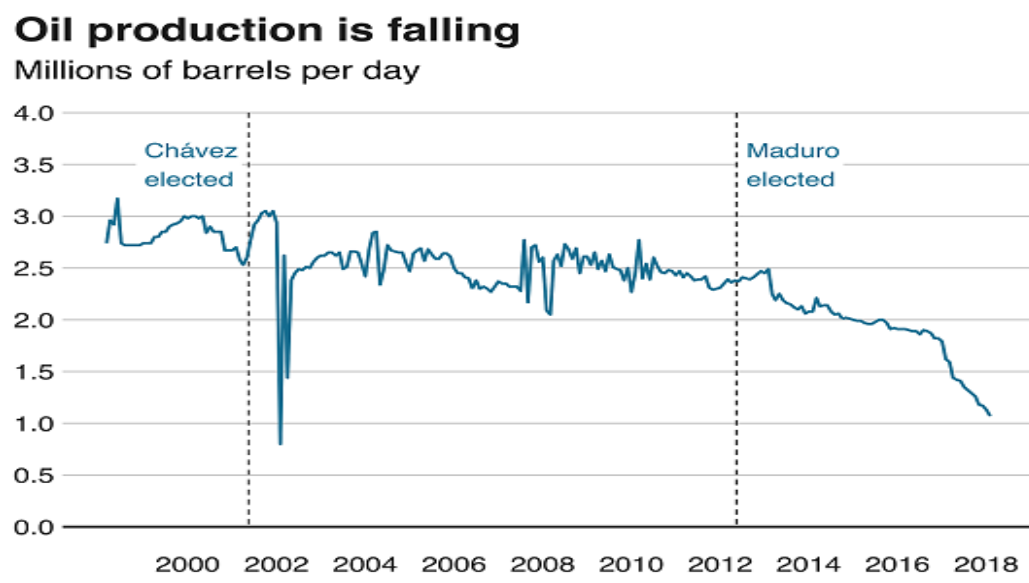
Figure 3.1 Venezuela Economic Crisis (Hyperinflation)



Source: BBC News

The falling price of oil has an overwhelming impact on Venezuela's economy since the country was highly dependent on oil export as economic support. The emergence of inflation in Venezuela started in 2016, which its rate hit 800%. This caused Venezuelans to suffer to fulfill their needs. About 3 million people are fleeing to other countries to escape from the struggle situation faced by government, especially Venezuelan people. This is the largest migration rate in Latin America history. As Maduro just has begun his second terms, his administration faced massive domestic and international pressure to hold new election (Carmody, 2019).

Graphic 3.2 Venezuela's Oil Production



Source BBC News

According to Electronic Industries Alliance (EIA), currently, Venezuela's oil production was in average of 830,000 barrels per day. It downs from 1.2 million barrels per day at the early of the year. This rate was the lowest level since January 2003 when the suppress from national domestic brought the Petroleos de Venezuela (PDVSA) to a halt. National power outages, mismanagement oil industry of the country, and the sanction from the United States directed at Venezuela's PDVSA and Energy sectors. The production of oil has decreased significantly over the last three years. In 2018, the production declines and decreasing by an average 33,000 barrels per day in each month. The rates of decline increased to over 135, 000 barrels per day each month in the early quarter of 2019. The declines of oil production in Venezuela has limited effects on the United States. The exported oil to the United States also

decreased over the last several years. The crude oil export to the United States in 2018 at the average 505,000 barrels per day. That was the lowest demand since 1989. The struggle still running in January 2019, when the United States imposed the new sanction that banned the United States oil export to Venezuela (crude oils that blended with Venezuela's crude oil for processing). The executive order required the PDVSA-owned petroleum payments and petroleum products into an escrow account that cannot be accessed by the company. In February and March, the import of crude oil of the United States from Venezuela have decreased because, without the direct access to cash payments, PDVSA has a little reason to export oil to the United States. On the other side, China, India, and the other countries continued to receive crude oil from Venezuela. Venezuela probably reserved some crude oil cargoes in floating storage until intended for export until finding the new buyers (EIA, 2019).

The United States Policy in Latin America

The national interests of the United States are diverse, including political, economic, security, and humanitarian matters. The United States has been tied with 11 countries in Latin America in economic sectors. Primarily, Venezuela and Mexico are the suppliers of crude oil. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the United States has been a prominent actor especially in Venezuela related to undemocratic practice that has been a concern for the United States.

There are some priorities of the United States in Latin America and the Caribbean during Obama administration. The president has set four pillars of priorities framework for the United States policy:

- 1) To promote economic and social opportunity;
- 2) To ensure citizen security;
- 3) To strengthen effective institutions of democratic governance; and
- 4) To secure a clean energy future

These four priorities are based on the reason of the States interest in contributing to the building stable, prosperous, and democratic nations in order to be able to take a prominent role in dealing with the global challenges. Obama has emphasized the policy under diplomacy way where mutual respect through engagement in dialogue responsibility should be put on the first place, which is equally valued.

In economic and social opportunity, the United States has a massive role in development assistance program that focuses on education and health for a long time. In 2008, the program called The Pathways to Prosperity Initiative launched to help countries learn from each other's experiences through sharing best practices and goals to promote prosperity, social justice, and growth. In 2009, Inter-American Social Protection Network (IASPN), the United States organization, launched to facilitate the exchange information related to the policies, experiences, and best practices in order to eliminate social disparities, inequality, and intense poverty. In 2011, *100,000 Strong in the Americas* was launched to raise the number of students in Latin America to study in the United States. Still, in the same year, the United States of Feed the Future Initiative (FTF) launched in order to counter global hunger and advance food security. Moreover, in 2012 President Obama has launched three programs. The first, the Small Business Network of the Americas (SBNA), is purposed to help small business to participate in international trade through national networks. The second, the Women's Entrepreneurship in the Americas (WEAmericas), is purposed to increase women's participation in the economic field. The third, the Innovation Fund of the Americas, is launched by USAID to help finance lower cost and effective solution towards development challenges (Sullivan, Latin America and the Caribbean: Key Issues for The 113 Congress, 2014).

The policies implemented in Latin America countries shows that the role of the United States is really important in developing certain aspect such as the political and economic field. The programs that were offered is really beneficial for Latin America's prosperity in the future. Not only that, but it also helps Latin America to strengthen the relationship between the United States. Thus, the United States sees Latin America as potency profitable since it has many abundant natural resources that can be an economic foundation to increase economic power for Latin America countries as well as the United States as country-partner.

The Traces of the United States Sanctions towards Venezuela

The United States takes massive power-imposed sanctions towards Venezuela for more than a decade as a form of responding to Venezuela's government activities. The sanctions are including terrorism, drug trafficking, trafficking in person, anti-democratic actions, corruption, and human rights violations.

1) Terrorism-related Sanctions

In 2006, the United States was concerned about the lack of cooperation of Venezuela on anti-terrorism efforts. The secretary of the United States has stated that Venezuela is not cooperating fully with the United States anti-terrorism efforts and determines a Section 40A of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2781). Since that, the United States has banned all commercial arms sales and retransfer to Venezuela.

In 2008, the United States of Department of Treasury Treasury (USDT) imposed sanctions to two people and travel agencies because they provided loan support to Lebanon-based Islamic Shiite group Hezbollah, a radical movement. This was taken to an Executive Order (E.O) 13224 in purposed to prevent loan support for terrorist and its activities.

2) Drug Trafficking-related Sanctions

In 2005, the United States was concerned about the lack of cooperation of Venezuela on counter-narcotics efforts. At the time, the president has made a determination to procedures set forth in the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, FY2003 (P.L.107-228, §706; 22 U.S.C 2291j), which Venezuela has failed to demonstrate and the obligations under narcotics agreements. The recent determination that has made by Trump for FY2019 was in September; the president put aside the restrictions of foreign aid for the program in order to support the promotion of democracy.

The economic sanctions that imposed by the United States of Department of Treasury on 22 mentioned that people that connected to Venezuela and 27 companies to designate them Specially Designated Narcotics Traffickers based on the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (Kingpin Act; P.L. 106-120, Title VIII; 21 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.).

3) Sanctions related to Anti-Democratic Action, Human Rights Violations, and Corruptions

In December 2014, the Congress set Defence of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-278; 50 U.S.C> 1701 note). Related to the stipulation under the low requirements, the President has imposed sanction by blocking assets, and visa restrictions to whom are responsible for intense violence acts and human right abuses that involved in the demonstration on February 2014. This 2014 act extended by the Congress through 2019 in P.L. 114-194.

Obama released E.O. 13692 to implement P.L. 113-278 in 2015, while the Treasury Department released regulations in July 2015 (31 C.F.R. Part 591). This was purposed to block assets and visa restrictions for those who involved in the policies or action that destroying the process of democratic or institutions; violence acts or human rights abuses; degrade the freedom of expression of peaceful assembly; and corruption by officials of Venezuela.

Recently, the Treasury Department has imposed economic sanction to 82 Venezuelans to E.O 13692. In the era of President Obama, the assets of 7 Venezuelans were frozen by the Treasury Department. While, in the era of Trump, the sanctions was directed to 75 Venezuelan and military officials including Maduro and his wife, Executive Vice President, PSUV First Vice President, 8 members of Supreme Court, Leader of Venezuela's army, national guard, national police, 4 state governors, director of the Central Bank of Venezuela, foreign minister. The United States of Department of Treasury imposed sanction to the head of Intelligence service of Venezuela on May 7, 2019.

4) Sanctions related to the Oil and Gold Sectors

Trump released E.O. 13850 on November 1, 2018. This purposed to block the assets and prohibited any transactions of any person. Recently, there are 6 people who have been imposed a sanction for the involvement in corruption pattern related to Venezuela's currency exchange practices that produced \$2.4 billion corruption results. In March, the president of gold mining company in Venezuela was sanctioned.

Based on to E.O. 13850, on January 28, 2019, The Treasury Department imposed sanction to PDVSA, Venezuela's oil company which its property is blocked and the United States prohibited any transaction with the company.

The Treasury Department continued sanctions based on the E.O. 13850 on March 2019 that sanctioned the Moscow-based Evrofinance Mosnarbak that owned by Russia and Venezuela in matters of helping PDSVA to absorbed finance from oil sales. On March 19, Venezuela's state-owned gold sector company, Minerven was sanctioned for using the illicit gold operation to help regime financially. Moreover, on March 22, the Venezuelan Economic of state-affiliated and Social Development Bank (BANDES) and five subsidiaries that used by the Maduro regime was to move money outside of Venezuela.

The United States of Department of Treasury was imposed sanction to 44 vessels (including 6 shipping companies) that involved in transporting the oil of Venezuela where 5 of those companies transported the oil to Cuba on April 2019. Furthermore, it also sanctioned

Venezuela's Central Bank in purposed to eliminate the access to the United States currency and to limit its ability to do international financial transactions.

5) Additional Financial Sanctions

In August 2017, Trump issued E.O 13808 that prohibits Venezuela's government accesses the United States market, including PDVSA. These additional sanctions were targeted to the individuals and companies related to human rights abuses, anti-democratic actions, and responsibility towards humanitarian crisis.

Trump released E.O 13827 in March 2018 in order to prohibit transaction involving the Venezuelan government's issuance of digital currency, coin, or token. Moreover, he also released E.O 13835 on May 2018 that prohibits transaction related to the purchased of Venezuelan debt, including account receivable and the debt that owed Venezuela to pledge as collateral. It was purposed to prevent the corrupt Venezuelan officials by its ability to improperly value and sell off the public assets in return for repayment (Sullivan, 2019).

The United States Remain Unconvinced Towards Venezuela's Democracy

Since the relation between the United States and Venezuela has tied for a long time since Venezuela's independence, the United States certainly has an important role in Venezuela's development in the matters of transition into a democratic system. The intervention of the United States in the political structure of Venezuela has brought a big impact for the future in Venezuela itself. During Obama administration, he stated that Venezuela is a threat for the United States Security and released an executive order to impose sanction to Venezuela. This action was taken since Venezuela's government has broken the human rights of its people because of the involvement of Venezuela's officials in corruption and violation action towards Venezuelan people. The respond of Venezuela's president towards the sanctions seems to criminalize the United States by intimidation. The sanction is to prevent the deterioration of democratic values and its process. On the other side, Venezuela accused Washington as the suspect of the conflicts that happened in Venezuela after the election end. In the early of Maduro administration, he has blamed Washington over the demonstration of Anti-Maduro Regime with prejudice the United States as loan support to the opposition party and accused Joseph Robinette Biden, the United States Vice President who wanted to do coup de tat towards President Maduro (Sari, 2015). As the major actor, the power of the United States still exists even though both countries were into tension. Related to the

sanctions, the writer emphasizes that the United States has played its dominant role in Venezuela. Many times sanctioning Venezuela shows that the United States is dominant anti-socialist towards Maduro regime. Especially the sanction related to the event in 2014, after Maduro, won the election and demonstrations are increasing. At the time, many victims that caused by the violation action from the pro-government that was intended by the United States as a form of destroying democratic values. Not only that, it is continued when Venezuelan officials commit corruption that ruined the political structure which brought Venezuela into struggles.

On 2015, the relation between the United States and Venezuela is getting worse when Obama has ordered an executive order to give Venezuela a sanction to the officials because they were accused as a security threat, accusing the country's government of persecuting opponents, arbitrary detention, violating human rights and corruption. The current political situation in Venezuela is highly controversial since Maduro became the successor of Chavez. This certainly does not get approved and recognized by the opposition party. Even though Maduro became the president, the United States does not recognize him as Venezuela's president but Juan Guaido. This political crisis is an unusual issue that brought Venezuelan people into a dilemma on who is the real president. More than 50 countries have recognized Juan Guaido as president while Maduro was recognized only by China and Russia. Both parties also claimed themselves as president of Venezuela. However, Juan Guaido which is the president of the National Assembly has been supported by most International Leader even though he does not have the power to control the government practically.

In fact, the United States is anti-socialist towards Maduro and unconvinced about the process of democracy in Venezuela. One interview in 2013 with Univision anchor of ABC News, Maria Elena Salinas, Obama stated that he refuses to recognize Venezuela's president because he concerned about the crackdown against opposition party and blamed Venezuela's president for ignoring the basic principles of democracy and human rights. In his statements Obama said; "I think that the entire hemisphere has been watching the violence, the protests, the crackdowns on the opposition," Obama said. "Our approach to the entire hemisphere...(is) based on the notion of our basic principles of human rights and democracy and freedom of press and freedom of assembly. Are those being observed? There are reports that they have not been fully observed post-election" (Rueda, 2013).

In 2017 Maduro was established a new Constituent Assembly to form a Venezuelan constitution that seen as the effort to target and warn the opposition leaders. For the opponent's party, they think that the result of Maduro comes as the new leader is not fair, they rigged and blamed the system of electoral that tend to take a side to Maduro. Even the United States does not recognize it since Trump only recognizes the opposition leader, Guaido after he stated himself as the interim leader for Venezuela. Guaido was backed up by Trump while Maduro is supported by China (Mail, 2019). On March 2019, Trump spoke at Florida International University; his statements emphasized that the United States stands and support Venezuelan people and against socialism practice in the government that leads by Maduro. Trump also gave more than \$50 million as an additional aid to Venezuela's neighboring countries to ensure that Venezuelan refugees are safe (Zito, 2019).

At this point, by both Obama and Trump statements, the United States certainly strongly pressing the idea of anti-socialist for refusing Maduro as Venezuela's president as well as questioning the democracy practices that have been ruled out which means Maduro indirectly intended as anti-democratic.

Conclusion

The beginning of the United States diplomatic relations started in 1835 after some Latin America countries gained their independence from Spain. In 2009, the early of Obama's administration, he met Chavez for the first time in Trinidad and Tobago in order to strengthen diplomatic relations. However, the peak of both countries relations stands out when Venezuela was under power transition after the death of Chavez and being replaces by his vice, which is participating in a general election.

As the goal of the United States, the embassy of the United States in Venezuela becomes in charge in maintaining the relationship between both countries in cooperation and mutual understanding through the economic, promotion of commercial exchange, people-to-people ties, education, sport, arts, and cultural activity. Moreover, the governments of both the United States and Venezuela seek to improve their bilateral relationship in order to face challenges, mutual interest, and beyond. Among these are: 1.) Respect for democratic institutions and the rule of law, 2.) Respect for human rights, 3.) Reducing the transit of illicit narcotics, 4.) Promotion of shared economic prosperity, 5.) Promotion of bilateral commercial ties, 6.) Promotion of greater hemispheric integration

The massive power of the United States influences Venezuela's political and economic. In the early of Maduro's Administration in 2014, the diplomatic relation between both the United States and Venezuela were into tension. It started when Maduro won the election as president replacing Chavez after his death in 2013. The opposition party refused Maduro as president and conducted demonstrations. They considered the winning of Maduro is not fair. The pro-government at the time was sent to manage the flow of demonstrations by using violent action. Due to the tension in the domestic area, the United States warned Venezuela's government for being incapable to control the situation.

The secretary of the United States, Kerry gives a warning to the Venezuela government and the opposition to respect human rights and not to use any violence. (4) On 24th February, the spokesman from the White House stated that Venezuela government should be more aware and committed to protecting the human rights of their people by fulfilling their rights to express and live in peace. (5) On 13th March, the secretary of the United States, in the House Committee on Foreign Affairs meeting, accentuate about the goal to make President Nicolas Maduro gives a good respond and treatment to its people and to end the terror by ensuring that human rights can be achieved.

Unfortunately, the warning from the United States has completely useless and the domestic tension in Venezuela is even getting worse. In 2015, Obama released an executive order to execute sanction towards Venezuela's military members and intelligence services. This sanction was formed based on the Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014. The sanction that has been approved by the Senate will target the officials involved in a violent crackdown on pro-democracy protesters. The protesters have voiced their opinion about the abuse of regime. The United States decides to deny their visas, block the properties, and freeze the assets in the United States.

The sanction is not over after Obama's administration has ended. The current president of the United States, Trump also gave sanction towards Venezuela since the political and economic crisis are getting worse. On May 2018, Trump disallowed any transaction related to the purchased of Venezuelan debt, including account receivable and the debt that owed Venezuela to pledge as collateral. This is intended to the corrupt officials. On November 1st, Trump released E.O. 13850, to assign the forth a framework to block the assets of, and disallow a corrupt official to any particular transaction.

The sanctions that imposed by the United States was a form of strong refusal of Maduro's presidency. Both Obama and Trump also released a statement as a prove that they unrecognised Maduro as Venezuela's president due to his lack of capability in maintaining the basic value of democracy.

Some factors make the United States put its doubt to Maduro's presidency. The first is to prevent communism power since Venezuela gets support from China and Russia. The second is incapability of Venezuela's government in managing the economic and political flow. The oil prices fell and brought Venezuela into hyperinflation and had difficulties in fulfilling the national interest. On the other hand, the lack of basic understanding of democracy worsens the political condition of the country itself. The third is that the United States highly put human right values in the first place because Venezuelan people struggle and cannot achieve their rights in their homeland. Due to this situation, the United States doubtness was proven that Venezuela's political and economic structure was the main factor of the Maduro's failure.

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