

Steve Gowans On Venezuela Coup—US efforts to topple Maduro spurred by business interests, not democracy

[what's left](#)

Take One

US-Led Efforts to Overthrow Maduro Spurred by Business Interests, Not Democracy

(First iteration January 24, 2019)

By Stephen Gowans

The US-led and coordinated intervention to overthrow Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro by recognizing Juan Guaidó, the leader of Venezuela's National Assembly as the interim president, has nothing whatever to do with restoring democracy in Venezuela (which was never overturned) and everything to do with promoting US business interests.

Washington's imperial arrogance in effectively appointing Guaidó as president, attempting to go over the heads of Venezuelans—who alone have the right to decide who their leaders are—is motivated by the same concerns that have motivated other US interventions around the world: toppling governments that put their citizens' interests above those of US investors.



Maduro rally

That Washington has a propensity to engage in destabilization operations against leftwing governments is [hardly a secret](#). From 1898 to 2004, the US government undertook 41 successful regime change interventions in Latin America, an average of one every two-and-a-half years. And that excludes the unsuccessful ones, such as the Bay of Pigs invasion.

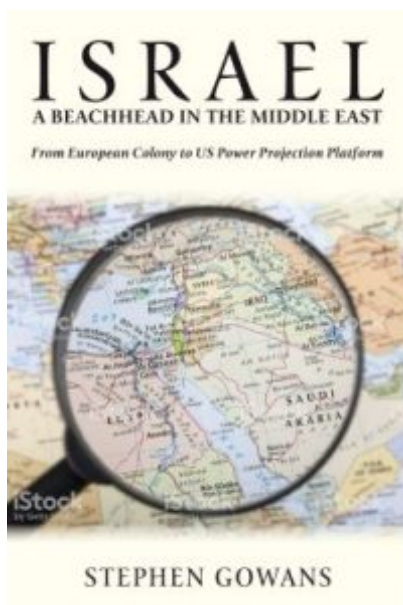
In almost every instance, US regime change interventions around the world have been motivated either directly or indirectly by commercial considerations, and were undertaken to restore or protect the primacy of US business interests in foreign lands. And in many cases, the interventions paved the way for the installation of rightwing dictatorships.

One ultimately unsuccessful US intervention was the 2002 coup d'état against Hugo Chavez, Maduro's predecessor. Washington immediately recognized the coup, hailing it as a victory for democracy, but privately recognized it as a major win for US business interests in an oil-rich state teeming with potential profit-making opportunities for US free enterprise.

Washington disliked Chavez because the charismatic leftist leader promoted the welfare of ordinary Venezuelans, rather than pandering to US investors. But the coup against Chavez was short-lived. In a blow against tyranny, the regime change was quickly reversed and Chavez, the country's legitimate leader, was restored to the presidency.

Determined to eliminate leftist governments in Latin America, Washington stepped up its campaign of economic warfare against the South American country, aiming to plunge its economy into ruin and the Venezuelan people into misery. This was a game plan Washington had followed countless times before and since, in China, Cuba, North Korea, Chile, Zimbabwe, Yugoslavia, Iraq, Syria, and Iran: ruin the target country's economy, attribute the chaos to "the failures of socialism" and economic mismanagement, and wait for the people to rise in revolt against their misery.

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Saudis regard their parasitical royal family as completely unacceptable. To protect itself from its own population, the monarchy maintains a 250,000 troop-strong National Guard. The Guard exists, not to defend Saudi Arabia from external aggression, but to protect the monarchy from its own subjects.

The al-Saud family's protectors are trained and equipped by the United States and its satellites, including Canada, which has a \$10-billion contract to supply the force with armored personnel carriers, used to put down the frequent uprisings of disgruntled Saudi subjects.

The National Guard's armorer, Canada, also recognized Guaidó as Venezuela's interim president, dishonestly attributing its decision to follow the US-lead to its purported commitment to democracy. Ottawa has colluded with the dictators of Riyadh in their crackdown on long-suffering, democracy-deprived, Saudi citizens, at the same time supporting General Dynamics Canada's efforts to rake in Pharaonic profits from arms sales to the democracy-hating Saudi despots.

Let's be honest about a few things.

[dropcap]F[/dropcap]irst, the agendas of US and Canadian political leaders are set by the economic elites and organized business interests on which they depend for campaign contributions, policy recommendations, and lucrative post political career job opportunities, and with which they're tightly integrated personally and professionally. Accordingly, they care about the profits of US and Canadian investors, not about the welfare, freedoms or democracy of ordinary Venezuelans. Indeed, they secretly harbor contempt for the bulk of their own citizens and wouldn't, for a moment, tolerate the flowering of an authentic, robust, democracy in their own countries. The idea that they care about the residents of a distant South American land is a fantasy for political innocents and the astonishingly naïve.

Second, US-led campaigns of economic warfare do make people's lives miserable, and many people may attribute their misery to the actions of their own government and wish to see it step down. Others may recognize that sanctions are the cause of their misery, and may support regime change as a way of winning relief from foreign-imposed misery. Indeed, the logic

of economic warfare depends on these assumptions being true.

Third, governments threatened by foreign-sponsored regime change face legitimate national emergencies. Maduro is not a dictator. He is the elected head of a government confronting a genuine national emergency engineered by hostile foreign powers. Measures taken by the government to defend its citizens against the determination of the United States to impose on Venezuela policies which cater to the interests of corporate America at Venezuelans' expense are wholly legitimate; they represent the actions of a democracy against a US-led international tyranny.

It is important to remember that Maduro's government, like Chavez's, has sought to put the interests of ordinary Venezuelans ahead of those of US investors. As a result, it has provoked Washington's enmity. The US intervention in Venezuela in recognizing Guaidó as interim president is emblematic of countless other US regime change interventions. Invariably, these interventions are targeted at leftwing governments that threaten the profit making interests of US businesses. The interventions have nothing whatever to do with democracy; on the contrary, where successful, they are almost always followed by rightwing regimes that build US investor-friendly business climates and integrate their countries economically, militarily, and diplomatically into the US-superintended and Wall Street-led global order. Foreign investors are indulged, and the local population is treated harshly. Far from spurring transitions to democracy, US regime change interventions aim to reverse democracy, and strengthen US global tyranny. The latest US-led intervention in Venezuela is no different, and is just a repeat, with local variations, on similar efforts in Syria, Iran, Cuba and North Korea

SUMMATION

In Venezuela, Washington, with Canada's help, plays the same old regime change game

(February 5, 2019)

[dropcap]V[/dropcap>enezuela President Nicolas Maduro has called Juan Guaidó, the self-declared interim president of Venezuela, [a treasonous figurehead of a plot orchestrated by the United States to capture Venezuela's vast oil reserves](#) on behalf of wealthy US investors.

As a summary of what's happening in the oil-rich South American country, Maduro couldn't have done better.

As [the Canadian Press reported](#), Canada and other members of the so-called Lima Group, an ad hoc body formed to oust Maduro, encouraged the opposition to find a new face without political baggage around whom it could unite. This is a standard US regime change tactic, previously used to attempt to bring about a change in government in Yugoslavia and Zimbabwe.

Venezuela's opposition, comprised mainly of representatives of the middle and upper classes, selected Guaidó, a young unknown. One poll indicated that [most Venezuelans had never heard of him](#).

Soon after being anointed as leader, Guaidó slipped into Washington to secretly meet with the Trump administration, presumably to secure its blessing.

Guaidó then hastened back to Venezuela where the opposition followed through on the Lima Group's pre-arranged plan to elect the young unknown as head of the National Assembly. According to a recent poll, [the assembly has a 70 percent disapproval rating](#).



Guaidó proclaiming himself the new president of Venezuela.

Next, Guaidó declared himself president—also, one gathers, part of the pre-conceived Lima Group plan—arguing that Maduro’s election was fraudulent and that the presidency was therefore vacant. [All of these outrageous lies and maneuvers were given unconditional support by the Western media, the prostitutes once again fulfilling their role as propaganda appendages of Washington.—Ed)

If that isn’t enough to paint Guaidó as a treasonous figurehead of a plot orchestrated by Washington and Ottawa, consider this: [According the Wall Street Journal](#), Guaidó’s plan for reviving the sanctions-crippled economy is to open Venezuela’s vast oil sector to foreign investment, privatize assets held by state enterprises, and indulge wealthy investors.

In other words, the US-Canadian agent plans to substantially scale back the public sector, surrender Venezuela’s economic sovereignty, and turn over the country’s vast treasure trove of natural resources to foreign investors.

Is it any surprise that the United States and Canada, home to big oil and big mining, have taken a leadership role in sponsoring him?

Carried through, Guaidó's plan would re-Americanize the Venezuelan economy and reverse the Bolivarian Revolution initiated by Hugo Chavez and backed by Venezuela's teeming poor.

US oil companies would benefit, a matter [US national security adviser John Bolton alluded to](#) in a recent television interview. Canadian mining companies would make off like bandits. And Venezuela's economic elite would return to the good old days. Meanwhile, the Venezuelan people would find, once again, that they exist to make the wealthy wealthier.

The Lima Group is nothing more than an ad hoc assemblage of countries brought together for the sole purpose of overthrowing the Maduro government in order to open Venezuela's oil and gold industries to ownership by wealthy US and Canadian investors.

It excludes the United States to disguise the obvious imperialist character of the project, and it deliberately excludes members of the Organization of American States who oppose the blatant interference in a member's internal affairs.

And here's a warning.

Venezuela is only the first of three Latin American countries the United States is targeting for regime change, [according to US administration officials](#). The other two are Cuba and Nicaragua, which, together with Venezuela, make up what the administration calls a Troika of Tyranny, but in reality represent states engaged in the project of putting the interests of their own populations ahead of those of North American businesses. The administration says that "the attempt to force out the president of Venezuela" marks "the opening of a new strategy to exert greater US influence over Latin America."

The United States [is no stranger to overthrowing governments](#).

In the twentieth century, Washington undertook 41 successful regime change interventions in the hemisphere, an average of one every two and a half years. And that doesn't count the unsuccessful ones, like the Bay of Pigs invasion.

In this century, the United States, working with Canada, overthrew left-wing governments in Haiti in 2004 and Honduras in 2009, and tried but failed to overthrow Hugo Chavez in 2002. [The narrative of the failed overthrow of Chavez](#) anticipated the one Washington and its Lima Group co-conspirators are using today—the president's policies no longer work for Venezuelans and the people are rising to defend democracy.

We've heard it all before.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stephen Gowans is a writer and political activist who lives in Ottawa, Canada. He used to write a regular column for [Canadian Content](#) and is a frequent contributor to the [Media Monitors Network](#). In the past Gowans maintained his own Web site, [What's Left in Suburbia?](#).^[1] However, since February 2007 Gowans has posted his work on a blog titled [What's Left](#).



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