

# Canada and the Coup Attempt Against Venezuela

By [Arnold August](#)

Global Research, May 14, 2020

Region: [Canada](#), [Latin America & Caribbean](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

*In the early hours of May 3, and then again on May 4, heavily armed mercenaries on speedboats attempted to enter Venezuela from Colombia. They were confronted by the Venezuelan armed forces, militia, police and local fisherman. Eight were killed in an ensuing shootout, while the others were arrested. Among those detained were two former United States Army Green Berets. The isolated pockets of army deserters are still being rounded up as these lines are being written.*

One of the leaders of the failed coup attempt is Canadian-born **Jordan Goudreau**, a former US Marine who heads up a private Florida-based security firm called Silvercorps USA. While he did not participate directly in the raid, he did leave behind a video recorded in Colombia in which he and his Venezuelan military partner take credit for the attempted coup. The other two Americans captured also testified to their involvement. The confessions lead us through a labyrinth of corruption and shady deals, from Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaidó all the way up to **Donald Trump**.

The goal of the coup plotters was the capture and arrest of **President Nicolas Maduro**. A contract signed by Goudreau, Guaidó and his advisors including exiled lawmaker **Sergio Vergara** and **Juan José Rendon** confirm in black and white the plan to overthrow the Venezuelan government. Maduro has blamed Trump and the Colombian government for the chaos, but the US has so far denied any involvement.

Not convinced about US involvement? Here is the clincher. On April 29, only several days before the May 3 adventure, **Secretary of State Mike Pompeo** boasted:

“I’m pleased to report that the multilateral effort to restore democracy is continuing to build momentum. I’ve asked my team to update our plans to reopen the U.S. Embassy in Caracas so that we are ready to go. As soon as Maduro steps aside, I am confident that we will raise that flag again in Caracas.”

The Trudeau government was surely aware of Pompeo’s confident statement. In addition, the news about the May 3 fiasco even appeared on CBC television that morning. What’s more, we know that some Canadians were already online in the evening of May 3 and again the next day, appealing to Trudeau and Foreign Affairs Minister François-Philippe Champagne to take a stand against the US-sponsored paramilitary action.

## Was Canada Unaware?

Yet, a full day and a half after the May 3 debacle, Champagne tweeted, tagging Guaidó:



**François-Philipp...** ✓ · 2020-05-04 ✓

Just finished a call with counterparts from Peru @GMeza\_Cuadra, Colombia @claudiablumc & Brazil @ernestofaraujo. We discussed the #COVID19 pandemic, the impact on the Americas, notably the Venezuela crisis and the humanitarian needs of Venezuelans.

@Jguaido



Couching his message in concerns around the COVID-19 pandemic, it appears Champagne used the global health emergency as a pretext to discuss the coup attempt. The facts overlooked by Champagne, in his apparent haste to phone and tweet, show that the countries Canada mentions (Peru, Colombia and Brazil) are all facing domestic disasters because of right-wing policies. In sharp contrast, Venezuela has the [best record](#) in all of Latin America in containing the coronavirus.

Moreover, the tweet indicates that the Canadian government is still very much on board with the US narrative on Venezuela irrespective of the failed military incursion, without making explicit reference to it. This is further reflected in another tweet, posted after further captures of mercenaries and the release of additional proof of the international nature of the plot as it continued to unfold. On May 8, Champagne tweeted:



François-Philippe Champagn...  
@FP\_Champagne

Great call with [#Venezuela](#) Interim President [@jguaido](#). Canada will always stand with the people of Venezuela in their desire to restore democracy and human rights in their country.



4:44 PM · 2020-05-08 · [Twitter Web App](#)

A few days later, on May 11, Trudeau spoke directly with Colombian **President Iván Duque**. According to the Canadian government readout:

“Today, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau spoke with the President of Colombia, Iván Duque Márquez, to discuss the latest developments on COVID-19 in each of their countries, and around the world... The two leaders also discussed the crisis in Venezuela and its humanitarian impact in the region which is heightened by the pandemic. They underscored the need for continued close collaboration and a concerted international effort to address this challenging situation.”

One would have to be naive to believe that both the successive tweets by Champagne and Trudeau’s statement were not coordinated to reiterate the government’s support for Guaidó as self-declared interim president, and its tacit alignment with Duque and Trump’s regime change agenda.

**Trudeau Should Take a Public Stand Against US Intervention and Sanctions**

On May 6, when Pompeo vowed to “use every tool available” to secure the release of “two American military veterans”, he was engaging in a rhetorical sleight of hand, portraying the mercenaries as “victims” in the fight against “human right violations” committed by the Maduro government.

Judging by Champagne’s tweets and the readout from Trudeau’s call with Duque, it is clear that Canada is pledging implicit support of the coup attempt without dirtying its hands in the murky waters of corruption and hitman politics. After all, if it wants to live up to its self-professed humanitarian role in global politics, Canada must maintain its image of peacemaker.

If one looks to previous crises, the Trudeau government is likely biding its time, waiting for events to unfold. Yet, its continued complicity in imperialist actions in Venezuela, and its failure to speak out against blatant violations of international law in Latin America speak volumes.

On May 8, Trump referred to the failed coup attempt and made it clear that he would have done things differently:

“I’d go in and they would do nothing about it... they would roll over. I wouldn’t send a small, little group. No, no, no. It would be called an army. It would be called an invasion.”

Canadians must demand that the Trudeau government publicly disavow all forms of military intervention against Venezuela, including the May 3 paramilitary incursion and Trump’s reckless threats of invasion. Irrespective of one’s views on Maduro, Venezuela has the right to self-determination and national sovereignty.

At the same time, one can have no illusions about Canada’s Venezuela policy under the Liberals, and thus a long-term alternative foreign policy direction must also be sought.

### **Canada’s Complicity in the US-Led War Against Venezuela’s Constitutional Government**

Some may have forgotten that Canada was involved in regime change efforts in Venezuela a few years after **Hugo Chávez** was elected and sworn in as President in January 1999. Ottawa’s resentment was focused on Chávez’s nationalization of Canadian gold mines, and his general hostility to large-scale foreign investment. The Bank of Nova Scotia, Canada’s most international financial institution, was also involved in mining investments in Venezuela and joined the push for regime change.

More recently, in 2017, Canada was instrumental in establishing the Lima Group, a multilateral body composed of 13 mostly right-wing governments including Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Saint Lucia. The Lima Group’s stated objection is the peaceful “democratic transition” of leadership in Venezuela. It was formed because the US and Canada failed to obtain unanimous backing from the Organization of American States (OAS) to support regime change against Maduro. Thus, the Lima Group is, in the words of Nino Pagliccia, “totally illegitimate in its pretension to be an international body.” The US is not even a member.

Trudeau and his foreign affairs minister have played a key role in the Lima Group, and have

also been instrumental in reaching out to European nations to bring them into the fold. Without Canada's leadership, the Lima Group would certainly have collapsed or become almost irrelevant. It is precisely due to the perception of Canada's foreign policy as devoted to "peacekeeping" and "humanitarianism" that the body has widespread approval, at least in elite circles.

The website of Global Affairs Canada contains almost 100 statements added since 2017 concerning Canada's role in the Lima Group. All of these entries, without exception, provide cover for the numerous coup attempts by the US. Not one of them criticize in any way the aggressive and wanton actions of Washington to enhance the suffering of the Venezuelan people to achieve its imperial aims in the hemisphere.

### **Sanctions Kill and Canada Is Involved**

Furthermore, the US has been carrying out crippling economic sanctions against Venezuela.

According to American economists Mark Weisbrot and Jeffrey Sachs of the Center for Economic and Policy Research:

The sanctions have inflicted, and increasingly inflict, very serious harm to human life and health, including an estimated more than 40,000 deaths from 2017-2018; and that these sanctions would fit the definition of collective punishment of the civilian population as described in both the Geneva and Hague international conventions, to which the U.S. is a signatory. They are also illegal under international law and treaties which the U.S. has signed, and would appear to violate U.S. law as well.

One would expect the supposedly progressive Trudeau government to oppose these violent economic sanctions, given that they are illegal and constitute a war crime. Yet, Ottawa also carries out sanctions against Venezuela. This policy has been lauded by the Trump administration. Vice president Mike Pence stated in Ottawa, alongside Trudeau in a May 2019 press conference: "Canada has imposed sanctions on 113 of the dictator's cronies. You've promoted the cause of freedom and free Venezuela inside the Lima Group and the OAS. And the two of us have said, with one voice, that Nicolás Maduro is a dictator with no legitimate claim to power, and Nicolás Maduro must go."

The Trudeau government's Venezuela policy is a disgrace to all peace-loving Canadians who support the right of self-determination. Irrespective of our individual political views, we ought to unite in support of the Venezuelan people against illegal and dangerous attempts to enact regime change. Is it asking too much for Canadian MPs to work towards a common ground, even during the COVID-19 pandemic, to demand that Canada rescind its sanctions against Venezuela, and rebuff the Trump regime for its support for the recent coup attempt?

\*

Note to readers: please click the share buttons above or below. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

**Arnold August** is a Montreal-based journalist and author of three books on Cuba-Latin America-U.S. whose articles appear in English, Spanish and French in North America, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East. He is also a speaker currently concentrating on

*Trudeau's foreign policy toward Latin America and the Caribbean. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.*

## Source

<https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/canada-and-the-coup-attempt-against-venezuela>

The original source of this article is Global Research  
Copyright © [Arnold August](#), Global Research, 2020

---

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: **Arnold August**

[http://Guillaume](#)

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)

[www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)