

Trump Administration Green Light's "Regime Change" in Venezuela

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*U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, **Nikki Haley** said that the Trump administration "wants to prevent another conflict like Syria, North Korea or South Sudan" in Venezuela which is a code phrase for "regime change." According to a May 17th report by the Associated Press (AP):*

Haley said the U.S. intention wasn't to be "intrusive" or "heavy-handed" but to support regional efforts to find a political solution and "show respect for the Venezuelan people" who want free and fair elections, the release of political prisoners and the worsening humanitarian situation addressed.

"We think if that doesn't happen we will certainly be hearing this in the Security Council because it will be a real problem — not just in the region but internationally," Haley told reporters after the closed-door briefing and discussions that lasted over 1½ hours.



Venezuelan **Ambassador Rafael Ramirez** accused Washington of trying "*to interfere in our domestic issues.*" The AP report says that the

"demonstrations have escalated into a vehicle for airing grievances against the government for triple-digit inflation, food shortages and a rise in crime."

What the AP forgot to mention was the fact that as early as 2014, Saudi Arabia flooded the markets with cheap oil, which at one point was at \$110 per barrel. Saudi Arabia coordinated the move with approval from Washington and to a point, Tel Aviv to drive down oil prices which would affect Venezuela domestically thus opening the door to violent protests against the Maduro government. Washington knew that Venezuela's economy that provides social programs is mainly based on oil exports.

According to a *Telesur* report earlier this year, not only the Venezuelan government's profits from its natural resource exports were targeted by the U.S. and its close allies, private food companies have also contributed to Venezuela's economic chaos:

Since the early 2000s, supermarket owners affiliated with Venezuela's opposition have been purposefully hoarding food products so they can resell them at higher prices and make large profits. Food importing companies owned by the country's wealthy right-wing elite are also manipulating import

figures to raise prices.

In 2013, former Venezuelan Central Bank chief **Edmee Betancourt** reported that the country lost between US\$15 and \$20 billion dollars the previous year through such fraudulent import deals. It doesn't stop there. Last year, over 750 opposition-controlled offshore companies linked to the Panama Papers scandal were accused of purposely redirecting Venezuelan imports of raw food materials from the government to the private sector. Many of these companies sell their products to private companies in Colombia, which resell them to Venezuelans living close to Colombia.

"Selling contraband is a serious problem. People here are taking large quantities of products meant for Venezuelans and selling them in Colombia," Valencia resident Francisco Luzon told Al Jazeera in a 2014 interview. Reuters admitted in 2014 that Venezuelan opposition members living in border states are shipping low-cost foodstuffs provided by the Venezuelan government into Colombia for profit. Overall, Venezuela's millionaire opposition are profiting handsomely from the country's food crisis while blaming it on the socialist government that's trying to eliminate it.

The crisis in Venezuela is getting worst; Washington's long-term plan was to create chaos. Create the chaos, and then comes condemnation from Washington. Then Washington gives the green light for the opposition to move forward and attempt a coup against the Maduro government. This would bring a civil war onto the streets of Caracas that would spread throughout other parts of the country.



On April 24th *The New York Times* quoted what National Assembly **President Julio Borges** had said to opposition forces

"I'm calling on the country, on all of Venezuela, to go out into the streets until we have a democratic country with social justice, where there's progress for all," Borges told Venezuelan television channel Globovision.

Borges urged anti-government protesters to take their anger onto the streets adding fuel to the fire in a volatile situation. The White House released a press statement on May 6th on the meeting between Trump's **National Security advisor H.R. McMaster** and Borges on the political crisis in Venezuela:

National Security Advisor McMaster met with Venezuela's National Assembly President Julio Borges at the White House yesterday afternoon. They discussed the ongoing crisis in Venezuela and the need for the government to adhere to the Venezuelan Constitution, release political prisoners, respect the National Assembly, and hold free and democratic elections. They agreed that there is a strong need to bring the crisis to a quick and peaceful conclusion

A quick and peaceful conclusion' won't happen anytime soon as long as the opposition continues to use violent tactics against the Maduro government as the New York Times report also said that

“Venezuelan government officials blamed the opposition for attacks against pro-government demonstrators on Monday during sit-ins organized by the opposition that gathered thousands in support of elections.” the report also said that “the events showed that Venezuela may be girding for a long war of attrition on the streets as the opposition calls for sustained civil disobedience against Mr. Maduro’s accumulation of power.”

The Trump administration recently imposed sanctions on several members of Venezuela’s Supreme Court according to *Time* magazine:

The Trump administration is imposing sanctions on members of Venezuela’s Supreme Court following a series of rulings that the U.S. says has usurped power from the nation’s opposition-controlled congress and sparked a deadly wave of unrest.

The U.S. Department of Treasury announced Thursday it is freezing the assets of eight Venezuelan government officials on the Supreme Court in an effort to support the Venezuelan people “in their efforts to protect and advance democratic governance”

The U.S. has now imposed sanctions; will a coup take place by the U.S. backed opposition? The Trump administration (**Secretary of State Rex Tillerson** in particular) wants to get their hands on Venezuela’s vast oil reserves. It’s not about the Venezuelan people or their grievances, its business. Tillerson wants Venezuela’s oil market under U.S. control. When the late **Hugo Chavez** became president, U.S. multinational oil corporations such as ExxonMobil (where Tillerson was CEO) lost a large share of their profits. The U.S. wants payback, so what happens next in Venezuela? A civil war between anti and pro-government forces seem inevitable. Haley claims that the U.S. wants to prevent another Syria, North Korea or South Sudan, but the reality is that Washington’s economic war on Venezuela was the first step into turning the South American country into a warzone.

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