

USA starts wars with Venezuela. Bombing campaign. Maduro reportedly captured.

The USA just committed another sneak attack against another nation. This time, Venezuela. On the 5th anniversary of the killing of Qasem Soleimani, Iran's top general at the time, the USA is starting another illegal war, this time with a South American Nation.

#Pascal

We are only three days into the new year, 2026, and Donald Trump, the President of the United States, has started a new war—or at least an aggression—clearly and utterly against international law. Here you see the pictures of what was carried out last night in the United States, or rather, last night here in Asia. From where I speak, it's currently 8 a.m. over here, which means in the United States it's now 6 a.m. And in Venezuela, in Caracas, this is what started last night. You can see explosions in Venezuela, in the capital, Caracas, and we now have several videos published by news agencies that clearly indicate a large-scale military operation is underway. RT Russia reports that overnight, multiple explosions were heard early on Saturday in Caracas, Venezuela's capital, according to media reports.

The blasts come amid a deepening standoff between Venezuela and the U.S. administration. Here we have another video showing parts of the city clearly coming under fire. So this was not just a limited affair—apparently there were outbursts and explosions in at least three cities across Venezuela. And to top it all off, it's now reported that Mr. Maduro has been captured. That's what Mr. Trump announced. Apparently, the president of Venezuela is somehow now on an airplane being flown out of the country. How that happened, we have no idea right now. It just seems that, if this is true, then one of the prime objectives of the United States has been achieved: removing Nicolás Maduro from power.

Many of us expected it would be an assassination attempt. That he's apparently being flown out of the country is really bizarre and reminds me very, very strongly of how the United States managed to capture Manuel Noriega of Panama back in '89—whisking him out of the country and then putting him on trial in the United States. So, after months and months of military buildup, with large parts of the U.S. Navy parked right outside Venezuela, it seems Donald Trump decided to go for what will probably be called a precision strike. And Trump has already boasted about it. I don't have it here on screen, but he made an announcement on his Truth Social account that reads as follows—just a moment, here it is.

The United States of America has successfully carried out a large-scale strike against Venezuela and its leader, President Nicolás Maduro, who has been, along with his wife, captured and flown out of

the country. This operation was done in conjunction with U.S. law enforcement. Details to follow. There will be a news conference today at 11 a.m. at Mar-a-Lago. Thank you for your attention to this matter. —Donald J. Trump. "In conjunction with U.S. law enforcement"? This is utter nonsense. U.S. law enforcement refers to police officers, to people of the judicial arm of the U.S., and these are certainly not the people involved in this—unless you're talking about the Coast Guard. You cannot tell me that this kind of destruction can be caused by police or the Coast Guard in another country—in Venezuela, in South America. You see, these strikes are relatively strong. They're big.

These are probably missiles that were fired in there. Max Blumenthal also managed to get a video. Max Blumenthal of The Grayzone says that Venezuela's capital is now under attack by the U.S. regime—no authorization from Congress, no popular American support, just another terrorist war for oil, plunder, and imperial control, initiated with shock and awe. As for the helicopters, I have no idea whether these are Venezuelan or U.S. helicopters flying over Caracas. It could even be planes, I'm sorry. I'm a lousy military analyst when it comes to this one. We'll see more.

We'll get proper analysis from people like Daniel Davis and others, who can immediately tell you more about what this means. But you can already see how large these attacks on Caracas were. This is not a small operation. This is war. This isn't just a *casus belli*—this is war. Before 1945, you would have needed congressional approval for something like this, because the U.S. president, of course, doesn't have the power to make war. But since all those considerations, and even the war itself, have been pushed aside—banished, really—even out of international law, the administration just acts however it wants.

My friend and colleague Glenn Diesen got his hands on another video. He's saying that the U.S. is bombing Venezuela in an actual, unprovoked attack. Many excuses will be given over the next few days—narcoterrorism, Hezbollah, Hamas, Iran, and others operating in Venezuela, democracy promotion backed by the Nobel Peace Prize, and so on. Again, you can see how large these explosions are and how massive the strike must have been. The fact that Nicolás Maduro—if he was indeed captured—that they got to him, almost certainly means to me that he must have been betrayed from the inside, that it must have been possible to somehow pay off people in his close circle to then, in some coordinated way, get him out of there.

I just cannot imagine U.S. Special Forces landing and taking him out of the presidential palace under heavy fire. So we'll see what comes out of this story with Maduro, what will be revealed about it. But RT is actually reporting that there were rumors the U.S. was trying to bribe people in Maduro's very close circle. There's something going on here. In November, the New York Times reported that one plan could potentially involve U.S. special operations troops, including Delta Force and Navy SEALs, to capture or kill Maduro, who was reportedly described as a narco-trafficker. There's another one I meant to read to you.

Oh, yeah, here, this one. In October, Trump said he had authorized CIA operations in Venezuela, prompting a backlash from Caracas. That same month, the AP reported that agents had tried to

recruit Maduro's personal pilot to capture the president and deliver him to the U.S., where he would be taken into custody on drug trafficking charges. So... things like this are now absolutely thinkable, if indeed it's true that Maduro has been captured. I should also say that his vice president actually hasn't heard from Maduro or his wife, and she's asking for proof of life. And, of course, it's the middle of the night.

This was the night of December 2nd to 3rd. So, in the dead of night—late evening or early morning hours—this operation started and must have lasted many hours. It's obviously still going on. So, a sneak attack, a nighttime sneak attack on the president of Venezuela, on the entire state of Venezuela, on the government of Venezuela, with the apparent intention now to change to the Nobel Peace Prize winner, María Machado, who is currently waiting, posting, and begging the United States—as a Nobel Peace Prize winner—to please bomb her home country. Which, of course, any good Nobel Peace Prize winner would do.

I mean, it's now understood that to win a Nobel Peace Prize, you either have to do drone strikes and start wars, or you have to beg for wars. That's kind of a given now, so she checks all those boxes. And the United States is still working on getting her into power—or the person who was running as her deputy, so to speak, in Venezuela—who ran in the last presidential elections against Mr. Maduro, and whom the U.S. administration says they recognize as the official president, not Mr. Maduro. Now, however... do we have more about this? Oh yeah, there's one more thing I want to mention here. It seems that Donald Trump really likes the New Year as a time to attack other countries.

I'd like to point out that it was on this day, the 3rd of December, in the dead of night, that Mr. Trump, exactly five years ago, attacked and killed Qasem Soleimani. Soleimani had just landed in Baghdad to talk to the Iraqi government. Qasem Soleimani, of course, was the leader of one of Iran's military branches—the top general of Iran—who was about to be received by the Iraqi leadership. The United States blew up the car he was using to travel from the tarmac into the city. That happened on exactly the same night, and Mr. Trump was very proud of it. He said, "Yeah, we gave it to them."

In response, Iran fired back a couple of missiles at U.S. bases—also, I think, in Iraq or Syria—without hitting or killing anyone, and the affair was over. Now it seems that Donald Trump is banking on this one going down in exactly the same way: being able to whisk away Mr. Maduro and basically create a regime change by fact. And of course, it's quite astonishing, because in one article I even read that the United States has an ongoing case against Mr. Maduro at the International Criminal Court—the very same court that the United States is sanctioning, or parts of it, because it issued an arrest warrant for Benjamin Netanyahu. Let's not go into that.

I do not think that Mr. Trump will ever hand over Mr. Maduro to The Hague. If he did capture him, Mr. Maduro would be tried in a mock trial—a show trial, a show of force—in the United States under U.S. law for whatever bogus or suspicious allegations they come up with. And if that's true, it would be a big theater. But I do believe this would be a serious mistake. If captured alive, Mr. Maduro

would become a prisoner—well, not a prisoner of conscience, sorry, I take that back—a hostage of the United States, as a sitting president of another country recognized by nearly all other nations. Not everyone, not all European states recognize Mr. Maduro, but China does, Russia does, and large parts of the Global South recognize him.

So we now have a situation where basically the entire Global South knows that the empire in the North has captured a sitting head of state and is holding him hostage. It'll be interesting to see what they do with his wife as well, if she's indeed part of this kidnapping that just took place. This is, of course, a new level of escalation. We haven't seen anything like this. Even Mr. Noriega, back in 1989, was the kingpin—the strongman of the army and the man who governed, who had effective control over Panama—but he was never legitimized in the same way through a public vote as a leader, as president.

And, of course, it must be pointed out that Mr. Noriega was a very willing puppet of the United States and the CIA in the beginning, and then fell out of grace when he went astray and did things the U.S. didn't approve of anymore. Now, I do need to—well, I'd just like to point out that I think this is extremely foolish. Until and unless the United States actually has large-scale buy-in from the Venezuelan public or the military leadership of Venezuela, this will not fly. It's possible that the United States has managed to undermine and capture key military leaders in Venezuela and, through that, now believes this is what it needs in order to achieve regime change.

Because again, regime change without the buy-in of important clusters of the political elite in a country won't work. You cannot just replace a president from one to the next and expect that everybody will go along, especially if it happens in this way. Even if the United States now says that the official president is Ms. Machado or her deputy, as long as the political structures in Venezuela do not accept that—well, you know, the Venezuelan constitution, like most constitutions, has a provision that if the president dies or something happens, then the leadership of the country is taken over by the vice president. That's exactly what would happen in the United States as well.

If Donald Trump were kidnapped, it would be J.D. Vance who took over the reins of the presidency, just as when JFK was killed and Lyndon B. Johnson came in. So what you have here—and we don't know the details yet—is whether the plan was also to kidnap the entire government and that failed. We don't know, because if it's really just Mr. Maduro who was captured, then what you're doing is testing whether the head of the snake is really the head, or whether this is a hydra with enough heads to just take over again. You know, a state, a government, a modern government, is not a one-man show. So if Mr. Trump believes that it's only Mr. Maduro who runs everything, then he'll probably have a very rude awakening.

The only way I can see this having any real chance of succeeding as a regime change—so that you end up with a U.S.-friendly government in place that just does the bidding of the U.S.—is either through large-scale buy-in from the population you just bombed. But usually, bombing a place has the opposite effect: people rally around the flag because they're under attack. You naturally start

believing the people who warned you that you were going to be attacked, and those people gain more credibility. And those people were the Maduro people. We saw that in Iran half a year ago, during the 12-day war, when the bombing of Tehran and other places didn't lead the population to stand up and throw out the sitting regime. In fact, support for them grew during the attack.

So in Venezuela, too, we're probably witnessing—well, we'll probably see—more approval of the sitting regime, not less. But I might be wrong about that. If you get large-scale buy-in from the population and then a new election out of this constitutional crisis, then maybe the opposition forces will win as well. Who's to say there won't be any cheating? But let's leave that aside. The other option to get this done is if you receive large-scale buy-in from the military forces. We're just getting pictures from The Guardian showing that the military in Venezuela has been activated and is patrolling the streets. Military personnel are guarding the perimeter of the Miraflores Presidential Palace in Caracas, Venezuela, on Saturday. So if Mr. Maduro has indeed been captured, that would mean these forces must have been eliminated.

If not, then maybe he was flown out, just as this other plan said, while he was on a plane. But now we're getting these pictures showing that people are obviously gearing up to protect their country. Again, until and unless you have buy-in from either the people or the army, you won't succeed in a swift regime change. The danger you're running here is that you're poking a hornet's nest. We know that Venezuela is not completely under the control of the central government. Venezuela has large forests in the back that are also connected with Colombia. We know there are parts of the country not under firm control, and we know there are a lot of places for guerrillas to go and withdraw into.

But we also know that the military so far has been very loyal to Mr. Maduro. We know that preparations for an attack like this have been going on for months. So the fact that this was possible obviously shows that the United States does have strength—pure, brutal military strength—to blow things up en masse. Again, pictures like the ones we've seen from Glenn Deason show that you can bomb targets, and the United States has what it needs in terms of military equipment. It has the drones, the missiles, the necessary airplanes, and large parts of the navy parked in front of Venezuela. So yes, there is military power. But after military power must come some political succession.

And if you cannot manage that, then all of this—what it will do is, it will destabilize a very large country with a large population in your backyard. And it will be a new breeding ground for drugs and terrorism. Congratulations, United States. Three days in—three days into the new year—and we've got a new war. We've got a new illegality. We've got new proof that there is no constraint, even on the Trump administration, that this whole charade of the "peace president," now a year old, was really nothing else than that. It is total domination of the hemisphere. The thing to look forward to is the reaction from Russia and from China.

The big question is, will they be more or less silent on it—tempered and measured—and basically, tacitly accept the United States' claim over the Western Hemisphere? That they run this show and

will not get involved in it? Or will they actually speak up and try to make things difficult for them in the Security Council? Will they try to support Venezuela, or whatever the successor government to Mr. Maduro is going to be, led by the vice president? Either of these two is possible. Either is possible. I don't know. But the reaction of China and Russia will tell us a lot about where the multipolar future is leading us. Unfortunately, it doesn't seem to be toward a less violent 2026. Thank you.