

U.S. War on Venezuela Has Global Ramifications

Larry Johnson is a former intelligence analyst at the CIA who also worked at the US State Department's Office of Counterterrorism. Johnson discusses how the U.S. attacked Venezuela and abducted President Maduro, and what will be the global consequences. Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennndiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glennndiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glennndiesen> Buy me a Coffee: buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/09ea012f> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

#Glenn

Welcome back. We're joined by Larry Johnson, a former CIA analyst. Happy New Year to you and to everyone watching.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, I was hoping we'd get a little farther into the new year before something like this happened.

#Glenn

Yeah, I was going to say, January 3rd — we didn't really get far. I had a feeling 2026 would be a rough year, but now we see the United States, as everyone's aware by now, has launched a large military strike on Venezuela and captured President Maduro, who, from what I understand, has been put on a boat and has probably reached New York by now. How are you assessing this development, though?

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, well, actually, I think he's probably about another 24 hours away from making landfall in New York. This is Donald Trump's George W. Bush "mission accomplished" moment. He thinks he's, quote, solved a problem and found a great solution, when in fact I think what he's done is create more problems for himself. Now, this takedown of Maduro — you know, we've done this kind of thing before. We did it with Manuel Noriega. We had a much easier situation there because Panama is such a tiny country, and we already had an established military presence in-country. Yet, you

know, Trump in his press conference today said the United States is going to be running Venezuela for the foreseeable future, and he named the guys who would be, quote, running it, as Pete Hegseth and Marco Rubio.

And when I heard that, my mind immediately said, that's like taking Cheech and Chong and putting them in charge of a pot dispensary. You know, they're going to be selling marijuana, but they'll be smoking more of the product than they're selling. This will be a disaster. Trump is trying to have it both ways — claim it's not regime change, but we're actually doing regime change. The Venezuelans currently claim that their government is intact, that the vice president is in charge now, that the Ministry of Defense is still intact. You can't rule out the high likelihood that some of those individuals have received hefty payments from the CIA to look the other way and allow this to take place.

But there's nobody who's got popular support beyond what Maduro enjoyed, despite Western attempts to portray him as deeply unpopular. This Corina Machado, the Nobel Prize winner who got the Nobel Peace Prize for doing nothing to secure peace, is somehow going to try to worm her way in. But Venezuela is a heavily armed country, and I can't rule out the possibility—the likelihood—that if any foreign influence gets into the country, it will be attacked. The level of crime, assassinations, and so on will go up. And the United States will probably face a point in the next two or three months where it feels compelled to send more troops in to try to stabilize the situation. That's the path we ended up on in Vietnam—just a few more people to stabilize the situation.

#Glenn

Well, Machado, I think she was preferred by, obviously, the Europeans. Indeed, Norway gave her the Peace Prize—a not-so-subtle way of trying to pick a successor after a U.S. military invasion. But Trump made the point that Machado doesn't have, and this is a quote, "the support or respect of the Venezuelan people." And I thought this was interesting, because I think Trump must be aware that this is not going to be a very popular decision—to topple the government in this way, for the United States to claim ownership over Venezuela's oil, and to put in someone like Machado who's going to essentially purge the country of anyone who doesn't fall under her ideology. So it kind of all begs the question: do you think this could lead to a civil war?

#Larry Johnson

Not so much a civil war, but let's call it a domestic insurgency that will make Venezuela very unstable. And it'll be parallel to what's gone on in Colombia over the last—good God—60, 61 years. You know, the FARC guerrillas, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, have been around since 1964. And despite substantial U.S. military assistance, despite repeated counterinsurgency campaigns, that group still exists. It's still in the fight. One of the reasons it's been able to do that is because of the porous borders Colombia has with Ecuador and Venezuela.

Venezuela, comparably, has Colombia and Brazil, which means groups can move easily back and forth across the borders, find safe haven, get resupplies, and move illegal contraband to make money. So it makes it very difficult to control.

I think the moneyed interests in Venezuela are going to do everything in their power to reap as much money from the United States as possible. But I don't see them fully subjugating themselves to Washington, D.C. And the Trump administration—well, a lot of those people weren't even around when this was going on. You know, throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the CIA had control of the government of Venezuela. Carlos Andrés Pérez, then president of Venezuela, was a paid CIA asset. At least, that's what I've been told by people I have no reason to doubt, because they're in a position to know. And in part, it was the failure of the CIA to properly manage Venezuela that created the economic problems leading to the rise and ultimate success of Hugo Chávez, and then, later, Maduro.

So this notion that there's some simple fix—that all we've got to do is replace one guy and everything will be fine—sorry, we've got a history we can look back on and realize that's just not true. You know, we got rid of Mossadegh in Iran, and that didn't ultimately settle the situation or create a calm Iran with no further problems. We did it to Diem in Vietnam. We've done it to Manuel Noriega. We've done it to Saddam Hussein. We've done it to Muammar Gaddafi. We've done it to Bashar al-Assad. So this notion, this fantasy in the West, that all we've got to do is replace one guy—that'll fix our problems, that'll bring it under control—and the irony is, they're still pursuing that same policy with respect to Russia.

All we've got to do is get rid of Putin. And again, nobody thinks through what comes next. This will be, for Trump, his "mission accomplished" moment, the same way it was for George W. Bush. This will be the pinnacle of his success. But I think two months from now, they'll be singing a different tune, and the situation in Guatemala and Venezuela will not be stabilized. Again, I think this is part of a broader plan. Trying to seize the oil in Venezuela is preparation for an attack on Iran, aimed at destroying the Islamic Republic. The contingency planning for that does anticipate that the Strait of Hormuz could be closed, at least temporarily. So you've got to have an alternative source of oil. Voilà—enter Venezuela.

#Glenn

Yeah, this idea that Trump should run, or his peg set should run Venezuela—and Rubio—until they find a puppet regime to take over, it's as absurd as Tony Blair taking over the administration of Gaza. I'm just waiting for them to topple the government in Iran and make Chancellor Merz the new Shah. It's just... this is very—the structure of it—I thought we'd moved into a softer form of imperialism, but this seems to be the old-school version. But the United States must have had plenty of people on the inside. The fact that they were able to snatch their president, that they didn't meet sufficient resistance... Do you see the US, the CIA, working with someone inside, people inside the Venezuelan government?

#Larry Johnson

Oh yeah, certainly. I think there were people paid. You know, the operation was carried out by Delta Force, and Delta Force is good. They're very capable, highly trained. But it's always risky, entering into that kind of situation. It's much like the story we told about the capture of Bin Laden. The story that never got out was that the Pakistani intelligence service was paid off to look the other way—which they did—because if Pakistan had actually been operating its air defense system, they would have disrupted that mission. The same can be said here, because flying helicopters into that part of Venezuela, you're going up over the mountains, and they do have air defense systems. Apparently, some were knocked out, but some just didn't go into operation. And it appears there was no security detail around Maduro.

Or if there was, they were not very competent. Now, I've heard from some people that the Wagner Group was sent there to defend Maduro. Again, I don't know if that's true or not. But this Western fantasy that we can remove one person—and by removing one person, get a perfect government and a stable situation—hasn't worked out in the past, and I doubt it's going to be the case here. And we haven't even begun to get into the legal issues that are going to crop up, since they're going off an old indictment of Maduro that was actually crafted as part of a CIA covert action during Trump's first administration. Once you probe into the actual source of a lot of that information, you're going to find that some of it may not even be admissible in court, because it was obtained through intelligence methods, and some of those sources are likely not very reliable.

#Glenn

This is the idea that all you have to do is take a leader, replace him with someone else, and then you'll have some wonderful new situation and it'll be stable. It's basically how you'd explain politics to children or fanatics: "You know, we have a problem in the world because there's a bad man over there. And if we just get rid of the bad man, everything will be fine. Everything will go back to normal."

So all the complexity of international anarchy, of global politics—the absence of a supreme sovereign, the competition for power, competing interests—all of that goes out the window. And it's just, "Oh, we have a bad man." And this is... this is essentially how the same story gets repeated every time. It's kind of sad that we haven't created more sophisticated propaganda, but it seems to work. But in Venezuela, not only did they snatch Maduro, they also suggested he didn't really fight back that hard. Venezuela has air defenses, they have drones, yet they didn't shoot down any of the invaders.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, well, it may be that—let's say the vice president cut a deal. Like, "Hey, you know, we'll take over." Again, if they think they can trust the United States, they're going to be sadly and sorely mistaken. And I think what we're seeing right now is—if you recall the initial euphoria that surrounded George W. Bush when he landed on that aircraft carrier in May 2003 to celebrate "mission accomplished." Hey, we took Saddam out, we got control of Iraq, we're good. And, man, that was the start of a new nightmare. It is true that this military operation last night ran flawlessly—no helicopters went down, or at least that's the story we're being told now. Again, as we've seen in the past, initial stories start to change as more details come out, but there was nothing so significant that it disrupted the narrative.

I'll put it that way. But the people of Venezuela—they get a vote in this. And if the United States is going to, quote, "run the country," well, does the mail get delivered on time? Does the trash get picked up? Do the utilities work? So you're setting some expectations. If the U.S. is going to run it, it better run efficiently, and it better run for the benefit of the people. But still, throughout Central and South America, there's a latent anti-imperialist sentiment among much of the population. And I'd be willing to bet there will be attacks on any Americans who decide to show up in Venezuela and try to participate in the government. They'll be attacked—killed, captured, taken hostage. But, you know, what appears to be a great victory for Trump, and is touted as such, I see as having a lot more problems down the road.

#Glenn

Yeah, if you want to topple a government—hijack it—you need to, well, put it into conflict with another state. So the one that hijacks the government can present itself as the defender, as was done in Ukraine. You know, topple the government, take over its intelligence services, but then make sure it's steered into a conflict with its neighbor, Russia. Then the coup maker suddenly becomes the protector, "helping" Ukraine. But there's no one, really, to push the Venezuelans against.

So, I guess my point is that the main opponent will then remain the United States. How do you assess the American objectives here, though, in terms of what they're going for? Is it just good old-fashioned natural resources—oil, regime change, obviously? I know Trump said it's not a regime change war, but when you kidnap the president, it's hard to make that sound convincing. But is this part of what was in the national security strategy as well—to revive a bit more of an imperialist remake of the Monroe Doctrine?

#Larry Johnson

Well, again, it's a complete misunderstanding of the Monroe Doctrine. The Monroe Doctrine had two components. One, yes—no foreign interference, no foreign activity in this part of the hemisphere—but the U.S. kept its hands to itself and didn't interfere in other parts of the world, of the globe.

Well, as we've seen, we're doing the exact opposite. We're interfering everywhere. I think one of the objectives of doing this right now, and taking control of the oil—at least potentially taking control of the oil in Venezuela—is tied to the U.S. decision, you know, I think that was made on Monday, finally, with Bibi Netanyahu, to proceed with new attacks on Iran that will be coming in, you know, in the next month or two, I would imagine.

The U.S. anticipates that the Strait of Hormuz could get shut down and wants to have some control over an alternative source of oil. So, you know, Trump hasn't stopped here. Again, built into this is the assumption that we've got full power and control in Venezuela. Venezuela is a big country, and its borders are not secure. There are elements that can move in and out that will, you know, I think, attack U.S. interests. And potentially, if the oil falls under Western control, they'll attack the oil terminals. So instead of bringing about a situation that's going to de-escalate tensions in the region, I think it's going to escalate those tensions—particularly Trump's ill-advised threats against both the president of Mexico and, more importantly, the president of Colombia, Petro.

#Glenn

Yeah, this is the problem. That's what comes next, because Marco Rubio seems hell-bent on, if this is a success, riding this wave and going after Cuba. And some have suggested Colombia could be next. Trump was asked directly if he would be willing to use military force against Mexico—which he would. Others are suggesting, you know, not just Latin America—why not Greenland? Why not, like they did last year, make a claim for the Panama Canal? I mean, there's so much pressure, though, which kind of begs the question: why? Why hasn't there been more of a response from Latin America? And I'm thinking especially of Brazil, this massive BRICS member state. I know they don't have a great relationship with Venezuela, but this isn't only about Maduro. This is about, again, as you said, a perversion of the Monroe Doctrine—a claim for hegemony and imperial control of the region. This is hardly in anyone's interest.

#Larry Johnson

Well, it also underscores the hypocrisy of the United States. You know, we claim our big interest in this is stopping what we call narco-terrorism. And then Trump, as part of his campaign against narco-terrorism, pardons a guy who's a major narcotics trafficker—but he also happened to be the former president of Honduras. So the principle Trump's establishing is: as long as you serve U.S. interests, we don't care whether you're a terrorist or a drug trafficker, we'll protect you. The minute you don't serve our interests, then we'll come after you—condemn you, kill you, capture you, whatever. You know, we see that as well taking place. The riot narrative that has been promoted this week with respect to Iran—again, this is connected to Venezuela. I don't believe in coincidence.

So, Trump meets on Sunday with Zelensky, Monday with Bibi Netanyahu, and on Monday we've got the start of protests in Iran. Now, the way the Western media was presenting it was that these were massive protests—anti-Islamic, against the control of Ayatollah Khamenei. They were chanting for

the return of the Shah. Well, it turns out that entire narrative was being produced by a group that is really the political front for what's known as the MEK, or PMOI. The MEK, Mujahideen al-Khalq, is a terrorist organization that dates back to the '60s and killed Americans as part of terrorist attacks. But it was in 2003, when the U.S. invaded Iraq, that we started the rehabilitation process for the MEK and took the Mujahideen al-Khalq from being a terrorist group to no longer a terrorist group.

They became a CIA-connected group, backed and supported by us. So this entire week has been filled with that narrative, along with CIA and MI6 money being pumped through these groups to individuals in Iran—to protest, to attack police, and to try to provoke a harsh response in order to build the story that Iran's on the verge of collapse. All of this is designed to sort of condition the public in the West to expect that a new war with Iran is coming. So then you get this in relation to Venezuela. And I think, again, the two are connected: as long as Venezuela is there with the ability to supply oil, we can run the risk that there could be a temporary—or even longer—disruption in oil coming out of Iran and the Persian Gulf.

#Glenn

So you see it as logical, then, that Venezuela would have to be taken before Iran?

#Larry Johnson

Yes, yes.

#Glenn

I've seen some comments from the EU—of course, from EU leaders. There seems to be a more critical stance from various state leaders, but from the EU leadership, it's just, "Yeah, well, an illegitimate president is gone. We stand with the people of Venezuela." I mean, there are no values, really. We backed the ISIS leader in Syria—still do. We're willing to partner with Nazis, different Nazi groups in Ukraine. I mean, there are no principles anymore. It's just quite shocking. But in terms of how it affects the wider great-power rivalry, how do you think the other great powers will respond to this?

I know the Russians aren't happy, but it looks like this will hurt China more, because they buy Venezuela's oil. It's an important trading partner. And I guess, to some extent, this will probably make China more dependent on Russia. They can't get it from other places. I don't think Trump really thought that one through. But overall, they must see now—not just Trump, but the wider political West—has become completely rogue, where international law has no bearing anymore.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, I think the events of this last week—going back to last Sunday, the meeting with Zelensky—and during that meeting, the CIA, in conjunction with the Ukrainian Intelligence Service, launched a 91-drone attack on a residence believed to be occupied by Vladimir Putin. And, you know, very cynically so. The Russians reacted with fury. I've never seen such an angry public reaction from people like Lavrov and Peskov in response to this failed attack, compared to previous ones. I mean, the Ukrainian-backed terrorist attack on the Crocus City Center back in, what was it, March 2024? That killed 143 people. That was huge.

You didn't see this kind of angry reaction before. I mean, the Russians were angry, but they didn't make the kind of statements they did about this one. And what's stunning about it is that nobody was killed—they shot them all down. But the Russians recovered key components, examined the controller from one of the drones, and were able to quickly identify exactly how the targeting data had been entered. They knew right away that the United States was directly involved. And we got further confirmation of that this week when the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times reported that, oh, the CIA says there was no attempt to target Putin. That's a lie.

But you read on and it says, no, no, those drones were supposed to attack another target that was nearby, in the vicinity of Putin's residence. And you're going, okay, yeah, that's your story and you're going to stick with it? That it was in the vicinity but not intended to go there? That means that when the CIA said that, I knew right away they knew what the targeting was, because they were involved. There's no way those drones could have targeted Putin's residence without U.S. assistance. So then, moving forward, Russia says, "We're going to have to reevaluate our negotiating position with respect to Ukraine." Then you get this attack on Maduro.

And I think what this has done is it's affirmed that to the Russians and to the Chinese. Because remember, I think it was the Chinese deputy foreign minister who had met in Caracas with Maduro about eight to ten hours earlier. Well, the Chinese have expressed tremendous outrage at this violation of international law, because that's exactly what it is—a violation of international law. Now, the United States pays no attention to international law, but what's interesting is that both Russia and China have somewhat been sticklers for it. And, you know, I think this has now reinforced in their minds that the West is not to be trusted. We're not a trusted partner.

#Glenn

It did remind me of something that happened about six months ago, though. That's when you had all these drones smuggled into Russia, which were then launched to strike Russia's nuclear deterrent—quite extraordinary. And then you saw almost exactly the same thing play out in Iran. The drones were smuggled in and used to strike targets inside Iran. You can't help it—I think many people in Moscow took note of this and saw the connection. And now, of course, when you have this strike close to Putin's residence and then an attempted abduction of the president of another country, I think they're seeing some comparisons here. It all indicates that there are no rules

anymore. This is just the law of the jungle. All the gentleman's rules, the red lines—what can or can't be done—it's all out the window. So it kind of forces a lot of these countries now to deal with the United States in a very different way. Yeah.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, no, you're exactly right. There's a reassessment underway, I'm sure, both in Moscow and Beijing as we speak, saying, "Okay, we've got to recognize the United States is not to be trusted at all, that their word is worthless, and that we're going to have to see very tangible steps from them." You know, notice that Trump is now blaming Putin and actually accusing him of lying about the drones. But the Russians have proof—they recovered the controllers, they knew exactly what coordinates were input, they knew exactly how this was done. And for the United States to pretend it had nothing to do with it is just absurd.

#Glenn

The key problem for the United States, and for the wider shift in power, is that it can't really compete that well with China anymore. In the past, there were always some sanctions here and there to try to strip the Chinese of some competitiveness, but it was always concealed under some legitimacy—saying, you know, it's about human rights abuses. That isn't really done anymore. Now it's just very open: we have to roll back the technological development of China. The Chinese will see this, I think, as a direct attack on their strategic interests. I mean, they're going after a key trading partner, cutting them off. I can imagine the Chinese now being much angrier than the Russians.

But the Chinese, they're also... they have some ways to retaliate as well, so we shouldn't see this as simply being between the United States and Venezuela. A lot of the rare earths, such as antimony, the U.S. needs to develop weapons. The Chinese can, to some extent, demilitarize the U.S. a bit if they refuse to export the materials used for weaponry. But also, the Chinese—they buy U.S. Treasuries. They have a lot of ways of getting back at the United States if they see this as being, indirectly, an attack on China, which it is. I mean, when the national security strategy outlines that our goal is to assert this kind of Monroe Doctrine, where other great powers can't have a prominent role in this part of the world, they're referring to China. And this is what they're carrying out. So how do you see the Chinese responding to this, though?

#Larry Johnson

Well, I think, first, they're going to keep using the leverage they have on the economic front. They're certainly not going to be buying more U.S. Treasuries. They'll start dumping Treasuries—keep dumping them—and move into alternatives. And they're definitely going to maintain, if not expand, restrictions on the rare earth minerals that could be provided to the United States but won't be. So I

see China responding economically, but I also think it's going to have the effect of solidifying Chinese relations with Russia. Because, you know, this is one more brick in the wall showing that the United States is not to be trusted.

#Glenn

How do you make sense of the EU, though? As I mentioned, EU leaders came out with, well, tepid support, but made it clear earlier that they saw this as legitimate. They said, you know, we have to follow the UN Charter and international law. But in reality, none of this is legal. Right, right. Instead, they just focused on how Maduro is an illegitimate leader and how now, finally, democracy can come. So again, they didn't have much information about what was happening. So is this just blind obedience, or is there any national interest involved here?

#Larry Johnson

It's blind obedience. They are, despite their efforts to distance themselves from the United States, still puppets—puppets of Washington, D.C. They're like the organ grinder's monkey; they've got to dance to the tune being played in Washington. If they were really a principled lot, they would immediately condemn it. They've condemned Russia for violating the UN Charter with its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Now, I understand that Russia can argue under the UN Charter that it was, in fact, acting in accordance with Article 51 regarding self-defense, because of activities being carried out by the Ukrainians at the behest of, and with the support of, both the United States and other NATO countries.

The U.S. cannot make that same claim. The U.S. has based its argument on the idea that Maduro is not a legitimate president—that they stole the last election. Well, that's a claim, but it's not proven at all, number one. And he has conducted himself as president, but instead of recognizing the legalities under the U.N. Charter, many in the EU, particularly von der Leyen and Kaja Kallas, are finding ways to excuse what the U.S. did. And frankly, it's inexcusable. It's illegal. It's a violation of international law. But the United States doesn't care. International law is not relevant at all to U.S. policy. We ignore it.

#Glenn

Yeah, I saw this funny tweet earlier from Carl Bildt, the Swedish politician. He was making the point that the Trump administration shouldn't talk about taking Venezuela's oil, or say, as Trump did, "This is our oil, we want it back." I thought that was interesting because the excuses for doing this have been all over the place. It's been the narco-terrorism you referred to, the accusation that Hamas and Hezbollah, and even Iran, are operating in Venezuela—which is apparently also a legitimate reason to strike. But importantly, there was also this argument that it was our oil, we developed it, it belongs to us, and now we want it back. I think the Europeans are much more comfortable with the idea of just referring to democracy, freedom, and human rights, and then it becomes legitimate.

And again, this is what was in that tweet, which was so characteristic of a European leader: "Oh, we're not comfortable referring to oil because then it plays into the narrative of the Venezuelan government. Instead, what you should do is talk about freedom, talk about democracy, because then anything is legitimate." I mean, this has been the playbook for the past 30 years. If you refer to democracy and human rights, then that's the exemption you get from international law. Now you can deviate from it because you're pursuing humanitarian law instead of international law. But Trump didn't go down that path, it seems—or maybe he's going in all directions at the same time.

#Larry Johnson

But one out for him would be to go to the United Nations and say, "Look, we did this because this was not a legitimate president. The last election was stolen. So this time we want UN-supervised elections in Venezuela, and whoever wins that election will be the recognized legitimate leader." That would be one way I could see Trump trying to extricate himself from what's going to be a pretty dicey situation. Because, let's go back to what Colin Powell warned George H.W. Bush on the eve of the first Gulf War in 1990. He said, "Mr. President, remember, if you break it, you buy it." Meaning, if you're the one who goes in and starts the war, if you take over the country, then you'd better put it back together and make it work. Otherwise, you're the one who gets blamed, not some outside force.

#Glenn

Well, how is this playing out inside the United States, though? Because Trump got elected as the peace president, and he always lists all these places where he's brought peace. And, well, it's a bit deceptive, obviously, because he takes credit for ending the war in Gaza, but it was the United States that was sending all the weapons and financing. He takes credit for ending the war in Iran, but he's the one bombing Iran. So it's a very strange thing. But how do you see this going down with the America First crew? Because this seems to be where Americans are splitting—some thought Trump was going to end all these wars, and others think he was just going to restore America's greatness by showing strength and being tough, as opposed to his weak predecessors. I've seen some different signals coming out of the American media, but is this something that's going to divide his base further, or does it all depend on how the war plays out?

#Larry Johnson

Oh, no, no. I think it absolutely is going to divide the base further. I know in my own case, the level of anger and outrage I feel is—well, I think Trump's a disgrace. I think he needs to be impeached. But the problem is, Congress is compliant, complicit in this, because they're counting on the money that's going to be made by facilitating the return of U.S. oil companies, where they get to run the

show in Venezuela. And they're going to run it not for the benefit of the Venezuelan people, but for the benefit of those corporations and their shareholders. So this is very unfortunate. But Trump is setting a precedent that will allow other countries to do the same as it suits their interests.

#Glenn

Yeah. Do you think—well, how would you measure success? When do you know whether or not this war was successful? I don't mean that from a moral perspective, like whether it's a good war, but in terms of getting away with it—putting in a government that's obedient to Washington, getting their hands on Venezuela's oil. I mean, is it all about how quickly this can be done, or about preventing it from dragging out, preventing Venezuela from striking back? How do you see the measurements you'd use to rate this? Because you're the one who started off saying this is Trump's "mission accomplished" moment—like when George Bush stood on the warship with that big banner behind him, "Mission Accomplished." Yes, you toppled Saddam Hussein, but then the worst part was unleashed. So when will we know, essentially, if this has been a successful war?

#Larry Johnson

I think in two months. So, let's see—here we are, it's the first of January. By the start or end of March, we'll have an indication of whether Venezuela has settled down and submitted to Washington, or if it's going to be a permanent and growing problem for the United States. I think there's a high likelihood that the U.S. is going to fail to get control of Venezuela in the way it wants to. And then again, we've got to play this out in terms of the plan to attack Iran. Venezuela is an insurance policy in that strategy—fearing that if oil supplies get shut down out of the Persian Gulf, we've got an alternative in Venezuela. Whether the Venezuelans will be in a position to provide that, I think they will. But the potential for chaos is going to be significant until we can see exactly how the government is going to run and take care of the daily needs of its citizens.

#Glenn

Yeah, well, from the European experience—after destroying Libya and Syria—it opened the floodgates to a tidal wave of people flooding into Europe, and we're still feeling the consequences of that. Given that Trump has not only run on ending all these wars but also on stemming the flow of refugees, this could go very badly if the war against Venezuela gets messy and people start marching north.

#Larry Johnson

Right, right. No, I agree. So you get the refugee flood, and Colombia will be happy to let them transit on their way to Panama, and from Panama up the Isthmus, through Mexico to the border. So

yeah, I think you'll see another flood of refugees coming, because I don't see how this chaos that will seize Venezuela will end. It'll be more than just a temporary glitch—I think it's going to become a lasting theme for Venezuela.

#Glenn

Well, I keep seeing in the media here that anyone who wants to support this always leans on the same thing. They did the same with the attack on Iran, which was, "Well, they're an authoritarian government," as if that's the motivation—and also that this will somehow lead to more democracy, more freedom, or a more favorable position. And, um, yeah, I can see a million ways this can go wrong. Anyway, any final thoughts before we wrap this up?

#Larry Johnson

Well, again, this needs to be looked at beyond just what's happening in Venezuela. I think it's part of a broader U.S. effort underway to make 2026 the year of war. They're going to go to war with Iran. They've already gone to war with Venezuela. And there's no genuine intent to end the war between Russia and Ukraine. So that's going to be settled on the battlefield, and it's going to have consequences for both Iran and Venezuela, ultimately.

#Glenn

Yeah, the lesson for the world now seems to be that there's no real diplomacy—only deception and surprise attacks. So, yeah, prepare for war. Yeah, yeah. So if this is going to be the year of war, then, yeah, three days into it, we're off to a pretty good start. So... Larry Johnson, as always, thank you so much for taking the time. I know you're in high demand today.

#Larry Johnson

Well, thank you. Thank you, Glenn. And, you know, we always pray for peace. But unfortunately, we're off to a rocky start in 2026, and I think it's only going to get worse.