

CIA Analyst EXPOSES Plan A & B for Venezuela

How do you dismantle a regime overnight? Did the CIA literally just purchase the loyalty of Venezuela's generals to clear the path for extraction? And if the "drug bust" narrative is a smokescreen, is this actually a desperate, billion-dollar bid to save the petrodollar? To decode the mechanics of yesterday's attack, I turned to someone who knows the intelligence machinery from the inside out. Ron Aledo isn't just an observer; as a retired US Army officer and former contractor analyst for the CIA and DIA, he dissects the operation with the precision of someone who knows exactly where the bodies—and the bribes—are buried. Links: Ron's channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@ronaledoexciacontracor> Ron's X (Twitter): <https://x.com/ronaledo4> Neutrality Studies substack: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com> (Opt in for Academic Section from your profile settings: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com/s/academic>) Goods Store: <https://neutralitystudies-shop.fourthwall.com> Timestamps: 00:00:00 Introduction & Operational Analysis 00:08:57 Trump's Plan A & Plan B 00:14:08 Civil War Risks & Resistance 00:20:43 Future US Involvement & Rodriguez's Dilemma 00:25:57 Public Sentiment & The End of Chavismo 00:32:15 Latin American Reaction & Financial Cost 00:36:18 Strategic Goals: Oil & The Dollar 00:38:39 US Administration Dynamics: Gabbard & Rubio 00:43:55 Geopolitical Implications: Israel & Iran

#Pascal

Hello everybody, and welcome back. On the day after the attack on Venezuela, I am joined today to make sense of it all by former contractor and analyst for the CIA and DIA, as well as retired Army officer Ron Aledo. Ron, welcome. Thank you, thank you—glad to be here with you today. I'm very glad to have you. You sent out an email newsletter with your analysis, and I thought it was quite insightful. So I reached out and asked you to come online, and fortunately, you said yes. Can you first give us a little bit of your background so people understand how you're approaching this subject matter, and then tell us your assessment of how all of this went down?

#Ron Aledo

Yes, I'm a retired U.S. Army officer. I was born in Puerto Rico—that's why I might have a bit of a Spanish accent. I did my career with the U.S. Army and was stationed in Colombia, in Germany, at Fort Hood, Texas, and other places. After retiring from the Army, I became a contractor for the CIA and an analyst for the Defense Intelligence Agency, where I spent several years doing analysis. Later on, I served as a Joint Staff Operations and Intelligence Officer for the Joint Staff at the Pentagon. I also deployed to Colombia, to Afghanistan several times, and to Iraq until 2019. Now that I'm no longer doing federal or government analysis work, I still do open-source analysis. I focus

on geopolitics, international relations, intelligence, and military issues. So I put together an analysis of what happened yesterday in Venezuela based on different open sources.

#Pascal

So what is it? What happened in Venezuela? How was it possible that the United States just bombed a couple of places in Caracas and two other cities, and managed to kidnap the president of that country? I mean, I thought it was possible to kill him—you know, you throw enough bombs on the presidential palace, you kill the guy—but that they could go in and basically pull a Panama-style extraction, that kind of blew my mind. How was that possible?

#Ron Aledo

Yes, it was. In military and intelligence terms, it was a spectacular operation—extremely successful. According to open sources, and based on all the pieces you have to put together, it seems it was facilitated by the CIA buying off and putting on the payroll many, many people around Maduro—mostly from his inner circle. Perhaps his bodyguards, members of his cabinet, his assistants, and so on, but also a lot of Venezuelan military personnel. Remember, everything makes sense when you realize that a few months ago the so-called reward for Maduro increased from \$15 million to \$50 million. And I'm sure the U.S. government put a lot more than \$50 million into this.

But that was the first message to lure military officers and generals: "Venezuela, listen—work for us and you'll get paid. You'll get a very big salary, plus whatever else—goodies, visas—so you can come to the United States with your family. Whatever criminal record or charges we have against you will be deleted. Just work for us." And I'm sure that the sources the CIA recruited deactivated their defenses. They gave orders for people to move out of the way, not to shoot at the helicopters, and so on—plus the strategic bombing orders of the remaining air defenses and any military assets that could be a danger to the United States in and around Caracas. That facilitated the operation in a big way.

#Pascal

I mean, we know Donald Trump also announced, about a month or six weeks ago, that he had authorized CIA activities inside Venezuela. So the involvement of the CIA in this has not only been reported on but officially announced. And for people like me, from little Switzerland, who understand the state as something probably very different from how it works in the U.S.—the CIA actually has the power to do that? The CIA can just say, "We'll delete your records, you'll be safe, your family can come to the United States"? I mean, are they really calling these people? Is this actually something the CIA can do—just throw around millions, tens of millions of U.S. dollars, to buy people off?

#Ron Aledo

First of all, what Donald Trump said is an oxymoron. OK, that's just Donald Trump being media-savvy, a TV guy, saying that the CIA is in Venezuela. It's like saying there are planes at the airport, or that water is wet. Exactly. The CIA is in Venezuela—and everywhere. That's their mission; that's what they do. He doesn't have to say it on TV. We know the CIA is in Venezuela. I mean, ever since the 1940s, the CIA has been everywhere in the world. So yes, it's oxymoronic—like saying there are planes at the airport, something obvious. And yes, to answer your question, the CIA—depending on how critical or important the mission is, according to the national security strategy and directives from the White House—can spend millions, even tens of millions of dollars, to buy people.

Yes, absolutely. That's what they do—recruit sources all around the world. That's their job. So basically, they just need an order from very high up in the chain of command—from the CIA director, or maybe clearance from the White House or the National Security Council—and that's all they need. Then they start spending millions and millions of dollars recruiting people. "Give us information and you'll get paid. Hey, make sure nobody shoots at our helicopters and you'll get paid. Do this for us—tell us where Maduro is going to be—and you'll get paid. Make sure the bodyguards take the day off that day and you'll get paid." That's basically what they do. Yes.

#Pascal

Now, obviously, this worked beautifully, and there were other services involved. So, was this mainly a U.S. Navy operation in the air? Because all those helicopters and planes that came in—they must have been Navy assets from outside, right?

#Ron Aledo

Well, obviously, there were many agencies involved. The DIA was most likely involved because they handle military situations. And, of course, all the intelligence assets of the U.S. Navy task force in the Caribbean waters were active. The NSA, for sure, was active too—collecting cell phone data, emails, text messages, and so on—trying to figure out where people were at the moment, who was talking to whom, who was there, and who wasn't. Obviously, they do all that.

They're seeking intelligence—gathering intelligence. And obviously, the firepower before Delta Force came in was apparently part of a joint operation between the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Air Force. They bombed strategic targets in a surgical way—command centers, communication centers—and most likely eliminated Venezuelan military personnel they knew were loyal to Maduro. They also bombed equipment, especially air defense systems that could attack the helicopters. So it was a joint operation by all means.

#Pascal

Now, what does this mean for us in terms of the political structure of Venezuela? If the CIA was able to buy off that many people and this operation had the go-ahead, it must mean that the people in

charge of planning it—there must have been top-level staff, right?—then started coordinating the different branches. They must have judged that the chances of success, not only in capturing Maduro but also in creating a transition to a U.S.-friendly government in Venezuela, were good enough to warrant the risk. What's your assessment of this?

#Ron Aledo

Well, that's where the issue gets a little more complicated, because in theory, Maduro's people are still in power. He's out of the country, but his government is still in place.

#Pascal

His vice president came out today saying, like, the only official president is Mr. Maduro, and that she's only there to take care of things until he's back. So his government is, yeah, it's still in place.

#Ron Aledo

Exactly. So, in theory, his government is still in charge of the country. And Delcy Rodríguez, who is the vice president, took charge. She was the number two in command; now she's the number one. The ministers are still there, the loyal generals are still there. Maybe the generals working for the CIA are still there too, because I'm sure the Venezuelan government probably doesn't know who their loyalists are and who their traitors are.

#Pascal

Do you think Rodríguez herself might be one of the people who got bought off?

#Ron Aledo

It's possible. It's possible. I mean, when you recruit sources, you can recruit any kind of people. You can recruit the driver, the cook, the waiter, even the vice president. Everything is possible. They might not have the classified information, but still, it's possible. Yeah, it's a possibility. Now, it looks to me, from what Trump said and from leaving the government over there in place, that Trump has a plan A. And plan A, according to what he said, is that he wants to keep Delcy Rodríguez in power, kind of as a puppet president.

You are the president of Venezuela as long as you do exactly what we tell you to do. That's basically Trump's plan A. So, I mean, she controls the ministers, she controls the police, she's the figurehead. And apparently that's going to be the first offer that Trump and Marco Rubio make to her: do what we tell you to do, and you can remain, at least for the next five or six months or whatever, still the figurehead president of Venezuela.

#Pascal

And if that's the case, then what's needed is, of course, for Ms. Rodríguez to strongly condemn what happened and to be the leader of the resistance against U.S. aggression. But behind the scenes, everything is negotiated, and she goes along with the basic U.S. wishes, which basically concern oil. I mean, with Mr. Trump, it's very clear—it's all about the oil. They want the oil, and we've got the oil.

#Ron Aledo

I mean, regardless of what she said for the consumption of the domestic Venezuelan people and the Chavista supporters, I think it looks like Trump's plan A is to keep her there as a puppet president, a figurehead president, as long as she does exactly what Trump tells her to do. I think that's plan A. And then, slowly, start removing some people, replacing others, making some changes, signing some laws and decrees, allowing the U.S. to come in and take over the oil and the investors, and so on. And perhaps six or eight months from now, move toward a transition to a new government or elections or something like that.

But I'm sure that Trump also has a plan B: "Take this—be my puppet, the figurehead president in Venezuela—or we might remove you, because we're going to use the generals who are already working for us, who are on the payroll. We'll use those generals to remove you from power, and we'll make sure they win. They're going to stage a coup against you, and we'll use the assets of the U. S. Navy, the U.S. Air Force, and the special forces to make sure that whatever coup they carry out against you is a successful one." So I think that looks like Trump's plan B.

#Pascal

So either we're looking at the, yeah, well, the Panama scenario of '89, or if that fails, then we're basically looking at Chile in, I think, '73, right? When Allende was overthrown—yeah, '73. Then Pinochet came in and installed a good old military dictatorship, very friendly to the U.S. But I still have trouble wrapping my head around the idea that it was that easy to buy off all these people, while Maduro also—he made a point of saying, "Look, we have militias now. We're activating the militias. We have the workers' forces that are armed." I mean, you're setting up the country for civil war if things go wrong from here, aren't you?

#Ron Aledo

That's a risk. That's a risk, and I mentioned that in my analysis—the risk that a segment of the population, a segment of the government, doesn't want to play along with Trump. Trump is going to use strong means, a strong hand, to intimidate them and tell them, "Listen, you don't want to be blown up by a drone in the middle of the night while you sleep. You'd better do as I tell you. If you don't want to end up in a federal prison like Maduro, you'd better do as I tell you," and so on. So I think the intimidation factor is front and center in Trump's plan A. But again, I think Trump has a

plan B, and plan B is: if you don't want to play along with us, then I'm going to use the Venezuelan military, supported by me—by my military, by the U.S. military—and we're going to take over the country. We're going to do a coup scenario. In that case, everything goes to plan B, and they carry out the coup.

There's always a percentage of the population that's very radical in their thinking—very loyal to Maduro, very loyal to the ideas of Chávez, whatever—that might not go with the flow and might organize a resistance, an armed resistance, or some kind of militia or military action. So there's always that threat. I think the United States will do everything in its power to eliminate that resistance as soon as possible, and to provide all the intelligence, weapons, drones, missiles—everything—to wipe out whatever resistance might grow. But the possibility, the potential at least, is always there that some percentage of the population, the military, or the government won't go along with either plan A or plan B of Trump, and they'll stage a resistance, an armed conflict, or a kind of small civil war in Venezuela. That's always possible.

#Pascal

We also know that the hinterland of Venezuela was never really under the control of the central government. I mean, there are a lot of places where things could go horribly wrong under scenario plan A or plan B. From what you know about Venezuela, what do you think is likely to happen under either of these scenarios?

#Ron Aledo

Well, I think that most of the Venezuelan government, the people who are right now under Delcy Rodríguez, will go along with Trump—mostly because of money, because a good financial position is tempting, very tempting for them. And remember, Venezuela is a very capitalistic country in the sense that it's not like Cuba, for example. If I offer a Cuban intelligence officer or a Cuban general a lot of money, they'd say, "Oh, what do I need money for? I can't use it. Nothing's worth it." But that's not the case with Venezuela. I've been there several times. They have shopping malls, they have mansions, they had the boom of the '70s, and they have the good life.

They can buy that stuff with money. So I think a lot of them are going to be tempted by good economic offers—"We're going to give you a lot of money if you go our way." And many of the others, without Maduro there, with their leader arrested, might be intimidated right now. I mean, if they were able to come here in the middle of the night and kidnap my president, they might drop a drone on my head while I'm sleeping. So that has a very intimidating effect on them. So either through money or through intimidation, I think probably 70, 80, maybe 85 percent of the people at the top will slowly—not publicly, but slowly and quietly—go along with Trump.

#Pascal

So if that's the case, then the best-case scenario for Trump would be plan A—impose a little Pax Americana policy. Like, "OK, we did it with bombs, but everybody's so scared now that things still hold together. We get the oil, these people get some money, and we wrap this up as a success story of intervention that brought peace."

#Ron Aledo

I think that's plan A. Obviously, plan A is the less bloody, or the less violent, one. So I think that's what he's trying to push. He's going to try to buy the loyalty of the people and keep Delcy Rodríguez there for a few months—at least, I don't know, three, four, five, six months—and slowly transition, slowly change the pieces on the chessboard, slowly replace people. And when everything is ready and under control—perhaps six months from now—maybe there will be new elections, or maybe she'll quit and resign, and somebody else will come in, and María Corina Machado will become the new puppet president, something like that. But I think plan A is what Trump is trying to push right now.

#Pascal

So what we should look out for is how, in the next couple of weeks, Rodríguez—if she remains—will probably change the electoral commission. I mean, that's the first one you'd probably have to go after, right? And then—okay. Do you think, I mean, Donald Trump, in his address to the press this morning, also said that the U.S. will stay involved and the military will have a role, or at least that's what I remember he alluded to. Do you think this is going to be the case—that the U.S. will establish some form of military presence in Venezuela?

#Ron Aledo

No, I don't think the U.S. will put boots on the ground on a permanent basis. That's too risky. It could create U.S. casualties and tempt any resistance groups to attack them. So I don't think that's going to happen—not in the short term, at least not for the next year or two. But again, he's going to use a proxy government. He's going to intimidate or pay people in the Venezuelan government so they end up doing what Trump tells them to do—either through money, intimidation, or threats.

But I think that's how he wants to govern Venezuela, at least for the short term—until a new president comes in who's 100% pro-American, 100% liberal, and will play along with Trump. I think that's in the future, maybe six or eight months from now. But I think what he wants to do is put a Venezuelan face on it, and I think that Delcy Rodríguez is the good Venezuelan face right now—the one he wants to keep there. And this is very important, as long as they do what he tells them to do.

#Pascal

But wouldn't this put Venezuela in an impossible situation, where you have Delcy Rodríguez, who on the one hand has to pretend to be anti-American and anti-invasion and also pro-Maduro, while at

the same time actually doing what Donald Trump says? How do you think she could square that circle? Because, I mean, Maduro is now in the U.S.—Venezuela's diplomats have to do everything in their power to get that guy back, right? I mean, this is just an outrageous situation.

And yes, the U.S. is trying to frame this as a policing operation—law enforcement went in and is now bringing the criminal to justice. This, in and of itself, never flies under international law, under any circumstance. Of course, the U.S. and Europe will try to pretend that it flies, but it really doesn't and won't. And Venezuelan diplomacy will have to bring a case again to the International Court of Justice and the United Nations. So how do you see this balancing act being possible for someone like Rodríguez, if that's actually the side she's on?

#Ron Aledo

Yes, that's a very hard situation. She'll need to be very careful with her statements and her actions—maybe make one very loud and the other very quiet. And again, a slow, slow transition is what she needs to do. It's not a radical transition, but something gradual: law by law, decree by decree, change by change, minister by minister. Something that, in the end, gives Trump what he wants. And Trump wants the oil. That's it. I mean, he wants to invest in Venezuela and have indirect control over Venezuelan oil. And again, yes, this is all about regime change—about putting in a government he can easily manipulate and control. It's all about keeping the U.S. dollar as the dominant force in global trade. That's what he wants.

#Pascal

I want to explain that a little bit more. It's not just about the oil and its value, but about controlling all trade in U.S. dollars. That was also in your newsletter.

#Ron Aledo

Yes. Russia and China have been trying for several years now—mostly after the 2022 invasion of Ukraine—to slowly push the BRICS toward changing the way they do business with oil and international trade, and to gradually replace the U.S. dollar with the Chinese yuan. So that's basically what they're trying to do. They're saying, "Hey, let's move away from the dollar. Let's do transactions in Chinese money." And they're pushing the BRICS in that direction because it gives them more independence, more power.

That shields them more against U.S. sanctions, economic war, and so on. And that's something the BRICS are trying to move toward. But by Trump taking over—directly or indirectly, in this case—the oil reserves of Venezuela, that would give him more leverage, more control, more power to keep pushing the dollar forward as the dominant currency for global oil trade. So that's basically the strategic aim of this whole operation—the strategic objective: keeping the dollar as the dominant force in oil trade.

#Pascal

Now, you said that Venezuela is a capitalist country in the sense that it does have malls and money can buy good things. And Venezuela is in no way as isolated as Cuba or North Korea. So inclusion in the global economy would count for a lot. But on the other hand, Venezuela is also, well, you know, very proud of its Bolivarian history and of being the flag bearer of Mr. Bolívar, right? Hugo Chávez rallied under that banner, and so does Mr. Maduro.

And if the rumors are correct, then one of the things that got bombed last night was actually the mausoleum of Hugo Chávez—which, in my view, if that's true, is just horrible. It's an act of vandalism. But okay, you sent a very clear signal: Chavismo has to be over. Chavism—this is going to be a different game. Do you think the general population will buy into this, or are we going to have a couple of million people, or at least hundreds of thousands, who'll say, "No, we'd rather go to the weapons," once it becomes clear that plan A or plan B is going to be the game in town?

#Ron Aledo

Well, human nature works in survival mode sometimes. History has shown that many times. And once most people realize that their survival—their economic future or whatever—depends on supporting the new government, and the jobs are coming, social assistance is coming, money for food, money for gas, money for whatever is needed is coming by supporting the government—once Maduro is gone, like he's gone right now, and the figures, the historical leaders of Chavismo, begin to disappear one by one, or retire one by one, or move to Cuba one by one, or move abroad one by one...

I believe that's going to be a very important, very critical motivational factor for people to switch their support to the new government. Now, as I said at the beginning, there's always a possibility that a small faction of very ideological people—hardcore supporters in the military or in the government—will never play along and might create some problems, even the possibility of armed resistance. But I think that's not going to be most people. People change hats very easily, depending on their survival.

I mean, history shows that again and again—the king is dead, long live the king. So I believe that with specific policies, most people, either by intimidation or by financial gain, will switch loyalty. And there's a very well-organized Venezuelan opposition movement, especially here in the United States, in Miami, and they're ready to move forward. Oh, but Bolívar—oh, Bolívar believed in democracy, like us. They'll twist and spin whatever message they want in order to push their agenda forward.

#Pascal

Okay, so the best-case scenario for Venezuela as a country would be that we don't get a big schism, we don't get bloodshed, we don't get a civil war, but the Trump administration now starts showering

money—basically on the elites and a little bit on the people—and keeps everything under wraps. And that would at least maintain Venezuela as a country as it is, even though it's now basically under neocolonial...

#Ron Aledo

I mean, I'm not saying there won't be resistance. There might be some resistance. There might be some generals who don't play along. There might be some hardcore loyal people—hardcore loyalists to Maduro. And the Cubans are still there. The Cubans are in Caracas. The Cubans are a very strong foundation of the regime because they're advisors. They provide moral support, ideological support, bodyguards. According to Trump, some of the people who died defending Maduro yesterday were Cubans—apparently Cuban intelligence officers or bodyguards protecting him. So they're going to put pressure: "Hey, don't give up. Keep fighting. Keep supporting us, the Cuban regime," and so on. So it's not going to be a completely smooth scenario.

But again, I believe that because of the amount of money the United States is going to invest in this, and the amount of money they're going to use to buy loyalties and through intimidation, once they've already taken out the president, they'll start going after others—the minister of interior, perhaps, the minister of defense, perhaps—in the coming weeks. And once the Chavismo see themselves without leaders, without someone to motivate them to fight, to rebel, to struggle, there's a good chance they'll slowly go along with Trump's plan. He said today in the press conference, "If you are a chavista and you are loyal to Maduro, you should be scared. You're not going to have a bright future." So he issued a threat—a direct threat—today during the press conference. I think that's very real.

#Pascal

One more question about the broader implications. I mean, whether it's successful or not, this obviously has a huge signal effect on everyone else in Latin America, right? How do you think the rest of the region will take it? Will this be, you know, Donald Trump wagging his finger, saying, "This can happen to anyone—watch out, Brazil, watch out, Colombia," and everybody gets scared and basically stops the opposition, stops the BRICS, and so on? Or is it going to do the opposite, in your view?

#Ron Aledo

Well, it's having a chilling effect. Okay, most obviously on the left-wing or anti-U.S. coalition—countries like Nicaragua, people who identify with the left, like Petro in Colombia, etc. The other countries, obviously, they're also not going to welcome this. Many countries will see it as an insult to Latin American independence and dignity, and so on. But there are always people who will celebrate it, like Milei from Argentina, who is very much a neocon and very pro-U.S. in foreign policy.

So he already celebrated today. I mean, there are going to be some people like Milei who will celebrate it, but most people will either not celebrate it or at least view it with caution—a lot of caution—because it's a very strong, chilling message. I mean, the people who hate Maduro the most, like the right-wing groups in Colombia, will obviously celebrate this too, and so on. But you can see that many governments are already distancing themselves from it. They're not celebrating this at all.

#Pascal

Thank you for this assessment. I think this was very valuable. This is pure speculation, but I just wonder—given the military assets that have been parked in front of Venezuela for months, and the assets used for this operation—what kind of price tag would you put on this entire regime change affair? I mean, this was a rather expensive regime change, right? We're talking about billions of U.S. dollars, or where would you put the price tag?

#Ron Aleo

Well, basically because of the cost. Mostly it was moving the military assets and keeping them over there, and all the expenses that come with maintaining the active force and the Navy there. So, somewhere around a billion—maybe a billion plus—just for moving and keeping all the ships stationed there, instead of where they usually would be. So all that movement is expensive, perhaps one or two billion. It's not that expensive, I mean, when we compare it to other operations—when we compare it to the hundreds of billions we're spending in Ukraine to keep the proxy war against Russia alive—this is nothing.

This is a ballpark figure, but still, I'd say a couple of billion dollars at least, plus all the operational money you need for the payments and to persuade people. And now more billions are coming in to invest. That's something Trump said—he'll invest billions of dollars in the oil infrastructure of Venezuela. He wants to extract as much oil as possible, so that's going to be another big investment.

#Pascal

Yeah, but these investments will come with, like, 99-year leases—or maybe eternal leases—on Venezuela's oil. Again, I mean, the audacity of Venezuela to park its country over U.S.-owned oil. But let's leave that one aside. Is there anything else you think we didn't cover that's important to understand about how this operation went down?

#Ron Aleo

Yes, I think it's important to understand that this law enforcement thing—this police operation, this bringing a person to justice—is just a screen, a small screen. OK, this was all about regime change and about defending the dollar, defending it as the currency that dominates the global oil trade. That'

s the important thing, the real motivation behind Trump. The idea that this is a police operation against narcotics is just a small screen. But it's also a legal defense—Trump can defend himself and his administration that way.

Oh, we were just executing an arrest warrant, that's it. This is a fugitive from justice. This is about drugs. So everything like that is just to protect himself. That gives him a kind of legal immunity, let's call it that, against potential court action later on—people ruling this illegal. And Maduro himself, his lawyers are saying, "Hey, this is illegal, this is a violation of international law." And it also protects Trump, just in case the Democrats take power. In Congress in November—November of this year, 2026—there are going to be very, very critical, crucial elections for the U.S. Congress.

And if the Democrats take over the House or the Senate, Trump is going to be in trouble—a lot of trouble. They'll try to impeach him for sure. They already tried back in 2018, and they'll try again in 2018 or 2019. This protects him. This protects him. "Oh, they're just doing a police operation against narcotics." So this is the legal protection he needs. It's a very smart way to frame the whole thing. Even if it's 100% false, Frank, this is all about regime change. But it was a smart way to frame the whole thing.

#Pascal

Sorry, I keep saying "last question," but there are just a lot of last questions coming up. One more. Tulsi Gabbard was on record in 2019 saying that the United States needed to stay out of Venezuela. Tulsi Gabbard is currently the head of the intelligence agencies, so in theory, she's on top of the CIA. Do you think this was done with or without her knowledge or involvement?

#Ron Aledo

Obviously, she has to know. She has to know, but she's been very absent in terms of public support for this. She's been very quiet. You need to understand, ODNI—the Office of the Director of National Intelligence—well, they have real coordinating power. They coordinate the different agencies. In real life, they don't have operational power. The real operational power still resides within the CIA. And the CIA has a direct communication line with the president, with the National Security Council, etc. So ODNI—I'm not saying it's a nominal position—but it's not the operational ruler, let's call it that. It doesn't provide the operational directive. That's the CIA's role.

I mean, when I was doing intelligence analysis, I had to follow the ODNI standards for analysis, and I had to follow the ODNI rules for coordination with all the different agencies. Every time I wrote a paper, I had to coordinate with other agencies, etc. But again, in operations, it's the CIA that has a direct link to the president, a direct link to the national security advisor—who, in this case, is also Marco Rubio. Marco Rubio is acting as the national security advisor. So basically, what I believe—this is speculation on my part—but what I believe is happening is that she's remaining quiet because she's not enthusiastic about the New Yorker agenda. She wants to keep her job.

She wants to be the ODNI, and she wants a political future within the Republican Party. So she's not going to openly contradict Trump, and she's not going to say, "Oh, I'm against Trump, and I think Trump made a mistake." I don't think she's going to do that, because she knows she'd be fired and would have trouble resurrecting her career by 2028, etc. I think she's just keeping quiet—letting Ratcliffe do whatever he wants to do. The CIA director is basically saying, "I'm staying in my lane here, quietly. I'll just keep doing other stuff." And she doesn't want the cameras on her supporting this. I think she's content with just being quiet and doing her job without taking an active role in the operations.

#Pascal

So we can say with pretty high certainty that, when it comes to Venezuela, the neocon faction inside the Trump administration won out—Rubio for sure—and the non-neocons, Vance and Gabbard, are basically parked on the sidelines and are probably just trying to survive this somehow for their future careers, because both of them are young enough to have future careers, just like Rubio has a potential future.

#Ron Aledo

Yes, I mean, obviously they won't contradict Trump—or maybe they will, like Vance did. Vance made a very quiet Twitter post: Maduro was a very bad guy and an anarcho-terrorist. And that's it—quiet. But he wasn't at the press conference today. He doesn't want to be the face of the New York agenda. He doesn't want to be the face of the regime change agenda. He—uh, I don't remember—Vance has always had paleo-conservative tendencies that push him more toward isolationist policies. He's said many times, "I don't care what happens to Ukraine. I care what happens to Ohio. I care what happens to Wisconsin. I care what happens to Pennsylvania."

That's my people. That's what I care about. So he doesn't want to be there, leading the change in foreign policy or the New York agenda. Rubio, on the contrary, is happy being the face of the neocon agenda—he always has been. He's going to push for a very neocon-ish agenda. And remember, Rubio wants to be vice president, at least by 2028. He's going to push for a lot of protagonism in these actions, because then he can present that to the neocons in the Republican establishment: "Look, I did this. I'm the force behind this. I deserve to be at least vice president." So that's most likely what's going to happen—what we can expect for 2028.

#Pascal

Is there any kind of, you know, Zionist agenda also involved in this, or is this purely something Latin American? I mean, because, like, Machado was on record last week saying, "If I come to power in Venezuela, then I will relocate the Venezuelan embassy to Jerusalem." Do you see any kind of Israeli play here going on as well?

#Ron Aledo

Well, Israel supports this, obviously, because Maduro's government was very unfriendly to Israel. So they see this as a positive step. And Venezuela—Maduro had a very good relationship with Iran—so if they can cut Iran off from that relationship, it also benefits Israel. They'll be happy with this, obviously. They won't protest against it. I don't see any real forward involvement, but at least they'll be happy with this regime change, of course.

#Pascal

Is there any kind of connection you can imagine where, you know, first you take out Venezuela and then go straight to Iran? Because in Iran, things are boiling as well. And Bibi Netanyahu was in Washington just a week ago—less than a week ago, four days ago. So, in your mind, could there be any kind of operational connection between these two theaters?

#Ron Aledo

I don't think there's a direct connection, but I do think the United States will prepare for strikes against Iran very soon. Remember Netanyahu and the attacks he carried out on Iran a few months ago—he wanted regime change in Iran. That was his goal. It wasn't just about destroying whatever nuclear program Iran has or anything like that. He wanted regime change. He wants to bring back, I think, the son of the Shah with U.S. help, to form another neocon government over there in Iran and completely end the threat—or the perceived threat—that Israel sees from Iran. That was his strategic goal, and he failed.

The regime survived—I mean, not only survived, but also showed how hard it is to take down the Iranian government. They don't share a border with Israel, so the only thing they can do is missile war and air war. They demonstrated a new kind of warfare—a missile and air war without real combat on the ground. So I believe Netanyahu is frustrated by this, and he'll try again to push Trump to support a new wave of attacks on Iran, and perhaps attempt a regime change, like what I think they're trying to do right now with these protests in Iran—another soft coup over there. So I believe that's basically what we need to prepare for. And it's an election year again—a very important election in November.

Trump cannot risk not supporting Israel. He can't afford to not support Netanyahu in an election year. All the Zionist Christians—the Protestants of the South, the Bible Belt, the evangelical Christians, Baptist Protestants—they believe in this so-called Christian Zionism. They believe they have to support Israel or they'll go to hell. They think they have to support Netanyahu or God will be angry with them if they don't. And Trump can't risk that in an election year. He needs the support, the votes, and the motivation of the conservative Protestant, Zionist Christians in the South of the United States. He needs that. So if Netanyahu pushes it, Trump will give him more support and more bombing of Iran.

#Pascal

Sad prospects on the third day of the year, but that was a very good analysis—really insightful. Ron, if people want to follow you, where should they go?

#Ron Aledo

Yes, they can follow me on X—Ron Aledo, Ex CIA contractor. And they can also follow me on YouTube—Ron Aledo, Ex CIA contractor. It's the same handle for both YouTube and X. And anytime, very happy to be here with you today.

#Pascal

Thank you. We'll certainly have you on again. I'll put the links in the description box below. Ron Aledo, thank you for your time today.

#Ron Aledo

We'll see you. Thank you very much. Bye-bye.