

Daniel Davis: Chaos & More Wars After the Attack on Venezuela

Lt. Col. Daniel Davis is a 4x combat veteran, the recipient of the Ridenhour Prize for Truth-Telling, and is the host of the Daniel Davis Deep Dive YouTube channel. Lt. Col. Davis discusses why the illegality of the attack on Venezuela will fuel uncertainty, chaos and more wars. Daniel Davis Deep Dive: <https://www.youtube.com/@DanielDavisDeepDive/videos> Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennDiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glennDiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glennDiesen> 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, everyone. Today we're joined by Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Davis, a four-time combat veteran and host of the very popular *Daniel Davis Deep Dive* podcast. Thank you, as always, for taking the time.

#Daniel Davis

Always a pleasure to be here, Glenn. Thanks very much.

#Glenn

So you've been following the Venezuelan case quite closely. The U.S. attacked Venezuela, kidnapped Maduro and his wife, and now Trump says America will run Venezuela, even though the government is still in place—except for the president. How do you assess this whole mission? I mean, the tactical achievements, in terms of how it was carried out, we can't really deny that it went smoothly. But before everyone starts patting themselves on the back, it doesn't do much to address the wider strategy here. What actually happens next? What's been accomplished so far?

#Daniel Davis

Yeah, that's the question that I fear has gotten too little focus. And that is, what comes next? OK, yes—from a military perspective, taking the morality and legality out of it—it was an amazing success. The way it was conducted was probably far better than they could have hoped for. There was a lot of opportunity for it to go south, and it didn't. You can say that, tactically, it was a terrific operation. But a tactical operation divorced from morality and legality is, by itself, a problem. In fact,

you could almost say the success could actually end up undermining our own national security in the future.

And when you look at the legality of it—especially—there have been a lot of people here in the U.S. today, and really ever since this happened on the 3rd, bending over backwards trying to claim that this is legal. That it doesn't violate international law, doesn't violate the Constitution, doesn't violate the 1973 War Powers Act, and all that stuff. That's just nonsense. It's cut and dried: it's against international law, it's against the Constitution, and it's against the 1973 War Powers Act—American law. I don't care what Maduro is alleged to have done. I don't care about what he may or may not have done with drugs or whatever else. That's a problem—let me rephrase that—I do care about that.

But there are other ways—legal ways—to handle it. And that means, if you're following the rule of law, you don't always get to do everything you want. You might say, "Well, I want to just go get Maduro." But there are laws that prevent us from doing that. He is the head of state, whether we think it was legal or not, whether we think the election was rigged or not—that's not even relevant. He is the president of that country, the legally recognized president. If there's a problem inside, the people of Venezuela can figure that out, just like the people in our country could figure out whether the 2020 election was legal or not. No other country can come in and set that right.

We did it ourselves, and we handled that. Obviously, January 6th, 2021, was an ugly day, but we handled that too. Now, just imagine if somebody had used that as justification—just said, "Oh, American democracy is falling apart. We can't risk all these nuclear weapons falling into the wrong hands. We're going to have to come in and set that right," or something like that. It sounds absurd on its face—no less absurd than what we did in Venezuela—because the justification is even thinner than that. Maduro, and Chávez before him, have been in power for quite a long time. His vice president, who's now the acting president, Rodríguez, has also been in office for quite a long time and has served across administrations, etc.

So there's nothing new in any of this. And all these claims that this was about narco-terrorism—no truth to that at all. The claim that they're killing 300,000 Americans, number one, is factually fraudulent. It's not true. It's 75,000 or so, which is a high number, but the number claimed is not true. And the majority—the vast majority—of those come from drugs out of Colombia and Mexico. China and India, ironically, most people aren't aware of that, are far more involved in the lethal overdoses we suffer. Hardly any of them come out of Venezuela. So there's no truth to that. That's the first thing here. And then this idea that we can just go and take the leader of another country because our courts indicted him back in 2020 is, again, just ignoring that international law exists.

And there's nothing in our law that says that because we've indicted somebody, we can just go seize them by force of arms and kill forty people in that country in the process. If you do that, then you have to ask, well, how do we tell Vladimir Putin that he can't go and seize Volodymyr Zelenskyy? Because he's convicted in their courts, he's a terrorist in their courts. Or someone else, in any one of

quite a few countries, could say, "Hey, look at Benjamin Netanyahu—he's an accused war criminal, he's accused of genocide." So can someone just go into Israel and capture him? Or if he's in transit somewhere, can they capture him midstream or whatever? No. I mean, you can see people saying, "Well, good luck trying that." Maybe so.

But the precedent has been set, categorically, that we now say if your country—your law—indicts somebody, which is different from convicting, you can just go seize them by force of arms. How can we now tell any other country that they can't do that? We can't. We've forfeited all kinds of moral authority here in what we've been doing. And now, by openly declaring we are taking physical control of the company—or political control of the country—by saying they either do what we say or we're going to kill them, more of them, and by taking physical control of the oil we're threatening to do that with, and if we don't get that control, then we'll go back in with military force—that is the behavior of a thug and a dictatorial power. Now, people don't like to hear that in terms of the United States, and especially Americans.

It'll just get the fur up on the back of their necks. I'm sorry you feel that way. Our actions demand an accurate assessment of what we're doing. That's where we are. And I worry that Trump has been laying all kinds of groundwork that we might be going into Iran. It could be coming next—Colombia, Mexico, Greenland of all places. The target list just seems to keep expanding, and people keep talking to him, telling him on American television, "Yes, you're right, Mr. President, keep going." I mean, at some point, Glenn, I worry that a bunch of other countries may finally start banding together and saying, "We have to work together militarily, or they're going to come after us." And I think the chances for global conflict are just going through the roof right now while people are cheering and celebrating.

#Glenn

On the legal aspect, this insistence on calling it "arresting Maduro"—you can't seize the president of another country and call that an arrest. I like that comparison, because if courts in Venezuela claimed that Trump or Hegseth or Rubio were criminals, it wouldn't make it legal for them to go in and snatch their leaders. It doesn't make much sense at all. But international law does have a function, especially in the area of war. That is, even in the game of war, where we essentially kill each other, everyone has an interest in maintaining some international law to restrain this—to create some framework for curbing the excesses.

But what are the main ramifications now? Because if this is the new thing, there's not even any attempt to hide behind some liberal democratic pretense of supporting democracy. If it's just about, "Well, this is our oil, we want it back," or "These are narco-terrorists, so he's not a legitimate leader, we'll choose who's legitimate, we'll run the country," then once international law is demolished in this way, how will other countries begin to act—besides, as you said, perhaps seeking to collectively balance the U.S.? Which isn't in America's interest, of course.

#Daniel Davis

I'll tell you, I worry that the president may be thinking, "Look, we just demonstrated that we can go in with this really crisp operation—kill a bunch of people, take what we want, suffer no casualties—and now we're telling you, the rest of your country, your vice president, your other people in positions of power, you'd better fall in line or we're coming back to do more." Going in for about an hour-and-a-half operation to snatch and grab one guy and get out is a very different process from saying, "I'm going to use military force to compel compliance with a political objective and a system of governance on somebody else."

You've got to have boots on the ground—and I'm talking hundreds of thousands, not fifteen. A whole bunch. And you've got to have all the infrastructure that goes along with that. If you try to do it on the cheap and just say, "We're going to launch a bunch of bombs, and if they don't comply, they don't submit," then what are you going to do? See, I worry that Venezuela may say, "You know what? We're going to resist. If you want to start bombing us, we hope you don't, but we're not going to submit to this. Even if we have to go to war with the United States." If they calculate—Glenn—if the leaders of Venezuela calculate, "You know what? I'm looking at the balance of power..."

I'm looking at how much you're already extended in all these places—the Russia-Ukraine war, Israel fighting all the people they're fighting near, this \$11 billion you've just given or committed to Taiwan. I don't think you have the capacity to go into a war with us. I think you'll shoot your wad pretty quick, and then you won't be able to go much further. I think we can weather that storm. If they calculate that and say, "We're willing to pay that upfront price," the one they'd definitely pay from our initial barrage of missiles that would fall in there—well, we can't. We can't do this. So if Trump's bluff is called here, we'll be in a world of hurt. I'm telling you.

#Glenn

Yeah, I often refer to Trump as the president of low-hanging fruit. That is, he makes big threats—like in Panama. I thought that was efficient. Not moral or anything, but he just threatened that we were going to take back the Panama Canal by force, and then Panama would have to counter that by offering some concessions. And then suddenly, you know, they pull a bit away from the Chinese, they offer some concessions to the United States in terms of transit, and one can claim victory at home, saying, "Well, in the past we were in decline because we had weak leaders. I'm strong. Now we're winning." But again, you can only play this game so many times before the rest of the international system begins to wake up and take action.

And, of course, being too successful, as you suggested, can come at a price if it emboldens the Trump administration further. I thought it was interesting that he had hardly finished this mission in Venezuela before he referred to possibly doing something against Colombia, and then also Greenland, as you said. Why do you think Greenland was connected so closely to Venezuela? Because many people in Denmark, you know, they didn't applaud, but they gave their stamp of

approval for what the U.S. did to Venezuela. But when they see themselves being compared—like we should do something similar by taking Greenland—they're very offended, and they start talking about international law as if this is a very important value to them. So how do you see Greenland fitting in at this moment in time?

#Daniel Davis

You know, for some strange reason—and we can only speculate—but someone must have gotten into Trump's ear early on and said, "Man, we need to take Greenland." It wasn't enough that we already had military bases there and a good cooperative relationship with Denmark and Greenland. That had existed for quite a long time. But someone said, "No, that's not enough. We need more. We need full control of it." And somehow Trump said, "Yeah, yeah, let's do that." So we can only speculate why someone got in his ear. But what we do know is that it succeeded, and now he's just become obsessed with this. This was early in the administration, and it kind of went dormant for a while. Then he stopped talking about it and focused on other things that were happening in the Middle East, etc.

And I thought, OK, well, that was just a passing fancy—something he didn't keep his focus on for a while, and then it faded. But now, all of a sudden, I think whoever put that idea in his ear the first time got back in his other ear and said, "OK, now, because of this precedent we've set by going into Venezuela, we've proven that we're willing to take action. So now we can go back and threaten again to take Greenland. Maybe they'll do like Panama did—just give it to us—and we won't have to take any further action. We'll just have to threaten it." And, you know, is that what they're doing now, talking about destroying Cuba as well, or with Colombia? That sounds a little more like action.

In fact, on Air Force One last night, Trump was asked about Colombia, and he was point-blank asked, "Are you saying there's going to be military action against Colombia?" And he said, "Sounds like a good idea to me." That's about as close as he would come, but that's pretty straightforward—yeah, I'm thinking about that. And then, you know, the same issue with Mexico—they've been talking about that for a long time too. My big fear is that once you get a lot of this stuff in your mind, you start thinking, "Everything I do succeeds. I got the Panama Canal, I captured Maduro here, I'm going to pressure all these other countries in South America, and now maybe I can get Greenland for nothing just by threatening it." You just keep on getting more and more emboldened, thinking that you can't fail.

And, of course, that's just a potentially catastrophic overreach. And I'm telling you, all it takes is maybe it's Venezuela—somebody just bows up and says, "You know what? I don't care what you're going to do to us. We're not going to give in. We're going to fight." Or Denmark says, "You're going to fight us if you try to take Greenland." Something like that. And then, all of a sudden, we get stuck in a situation where we either have to take an embarrassing, subordinate position and walk away from it, or we have to do even worse and say, "Oh, well, now they've called my bluff, and now I'm going to have to punch them and hit them hard." And you see the whole international community—

the whole way the world has been together, really since the end of World War Two—could just come shattering apart. I mean, there's a lot at stake here, in my view.

#Glenn

If you were to make a prediction, where do you think the Trump administration would go next? What's the wider strategic approach driving it? Is it this idea of a new Monroe Doctrine—to prevent other great powers from having, not colonies, but economic ties and a strong footprint? What's the logic here?

#Daniel Davis

The Monroe Doctrine was initially targeted against European countries, basically saying, "Y'all stay out of our hemisphere—leave these countries alone so we can protect the nations around us." That was the Monroe Doctrine. It wasn't meant for us to have control over them. Now it's being perverted and turned on its ear. We're the ones who want to have dominance and physical control over the political entities in South America. That's a perversion of the Monroe Doctrine—the Trump Doctrine, or the Don Doctrine, or whatever he's twisted it into. It's weird, and it distorts what was actually the case in the past. And when you say, "Well, what's next?"

I mean, it looks to me like we're going to be almost gleeful about trying to suffocate Cuba to death. It sounds like Marco Rubio is going to use the leverage we're getting anyway with Venezuela to stop all the petroleum they've been giving to Cuba—and to destroy the regime. We've been doing this since 1962, when we first put sanctions on them, and then Castro and all that took off in the '60s. And now it's just like, well, that's what we do. It's beyond absurd. It's insulting when I hear a bunch of former NSA officials, when I hear other people claim that Cuba is a threat.

To the United States, Glenn, I've been to Cuba. I went on a Christian trip with some local churches, and they can barely eat. They barely have food. They don't have a military even worth the name. To claim that that's a threat to the United States, or that the communist government there is a threat to us, is a humiliating embarrassment—because they're not a threat to anybody. They can barely hang on right now. There's no reason we should have all these sanctions. And yet, you see them lusting after the idea of finally destroying the communist regime in Havana. And now we're seeing the same thing happening in Colombia.

And I think that, you know, probably, if you ask what the next one is—the next military target—it may well be Iran. Because, you know, with Netanyahu just coming here a few days ago, Trump was looking back again at Iran and saying, "Hey, we may have to knock them down again." When you look at military power, I suspect that might be the next one. Because one thing you've got to understand about what happened with Venezuela is that this was, as General Kane mentioned, months in preparation. We saw—I think it was beginning in August—when we started having that military buildup, and then that culminated on January 3rd. If you're going to do something else

militarily, either with Cuba—which I don't imagine we're planning on doing—I think they'll just try to strangle them economically to death.

But if you even think you're going to do anything in Mexico or Colombia, you're going to have to keep all that combat power there, and you're going to have to add to it. Then you're going to start doing a new set of rehearsals, which we saw some of being done even out in the open. But to do that, and to possibly do something in Iran—that's... we don't have the force for that. We don't have the ammunition. We could seriously get sucked into wars we cannot handle. And I pray that neither one of those things happens. But that's my concern—first with Iran, and then secondly with something else. If those ships and everything stay there, then I worry about something in Colombia or Mexico.

#Glenn

It's so counterintuitive—it's counterproductive. If you look at a country like Colombia, I've been there many times because I have family there. They're almost like a bit of Poland in Latin America. They've always been very close to the United States; they aligned themselves. But now, even if they get a new president leaning the other direction, a huge part of the country will be alienated after being threatened with attack. Same with Venezuela. When you remove a precedent, you also fuel a lot of resentment among the population. And even people who are critical of Maduro across Latin America—be it in Brazil—are not happy to see this kind of criticism.

#Daniel Davis

Yeah, and we haven't even talked about Russia or China. China has a lot of investment, a lot of money at stake in Venezuela, and there are a lot of questions about what's going to happen with that if we get control of the government. I can't imagine that both China and Russia are just going to be passive, saying, "Oh, bummer, you beat us again. I guess we lose everything and all the investment we've made—we're going to lose that too." I can't imagine them being passive in that regard. So I can imagine right now they're waiting to see, because so far the regime of Maduro is still fully in charge and fully intact. Only he has been taken out, but the whole system and government he had in place are still there. So a lot is going to depend on what happens in the coming weeks and months—about the government and how much control we get. But if it starts to harm Chinese interests, I doubt they're going to take that passively.

#Glenn

In terms of unforeseen repercussions, of course, what it will do to America first is also an issue of its own. But we're running out of time, so we'll have to address that next time. Thank you very much for taking the time.

#Daniel Davis

Thanks for having me on, Glenn. I really appreciate it.