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www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

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by NINO PAGLICCIA

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Guaido is Ending His International Tour to Return to Venezuela to His Divided Opposition

We have to admit that the US public relations apparatus played a good stint at leaving Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaidó's visit with president Trump last in what seemed an afterthought. When many thought that Trump had snubbed him in Davos and Miami, Washington gave him its full attention, normally reserved for real presidents, following the recent international trip that Guaidó took to muster abroad the political support that he cannot get in his own country.

As a special guest at the State of the Union speech Trump praised Guaidó as a "very brave man" and "the true and legitimate president of Venezuela". He avoided altogether the use of the extra label "interim", never mind the fact that Guaidó was never elected and that recently lost the title of speaker in the Venezuelan National Assembly.

Both Republicans and Democrats gave Guaidó a standing ovation, which must be interpreted as a sign of the common goal of the two parties on US foreign policy.

Guaidó met with several people of the US political bureaucracy that would give him a reason to brag at home about his popularity and his cause; the cause being to overthrow Nicolas Maduro to the pleasure of the regime change proponents.

Based on his own posts on his Twitter account Guaidó has met with a number of US personalities in Washington. Aside from the obvious photo-ops with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi he met with US envoy for Venezuela, Elliott Abrams, and a number of mostly Congresspeople from the Democratic Party. Additional meetings were held with OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro, as well

as with Inter-American Development Bank and USAID heads. Standing next to Guaidó, USAID Mark Green felt he had to remark that all of the organisation's funding goes to Venezuelan NGOs and not to the opposition leader. Explanation not needed. We all know where USAID money comes from and how it's used. There were also face-to-face meetings with president Trump and vice-president Mike Pence but there have been no joint statements or media conferences.

The extent of Guaidó's message has been underwhelming and predictable, limited to a repetition of accusations of the Maduro government as being a "dictatorship, "drug trafficking" and "promoter of international terrorism". He used precisely the standard language of the US Hybrid War script as explained by analyst Andrew Korybko: "The US then wages information warfare against the targeted government in order to delegitimize it by usually portraying the authorities as part of a 'dictatorship' that is 'attacking innocent civilians for no reason'".

He also repeated self-praising catch phrases in the typical US-style as "lover of liberty and a free world", and the "need to re-establish democracy" in Venezuela, exposing the incongruence with his past as a violent guarimbero (rioter) on the streets of Caracas.

What is quite significant is that, at least at the time of this writing, there have been no plans of a visit by Guaidó to the UN in New York, just a short distance from Washington. However, it is quite understandable. A Venezuelan opposition attempt last September to receive the desired recognition at the UN was frustrated.

Further, the UN currently recognises the Maduro government and its representatives. The UN has been under pressure by the US to recognise Guaidó and withdraw the credentials of the legitimate Venezuelan envoy. Secretary General Antonio Guterres has made it very clear that the recognition of the government of a member State is the function of the General Assembly and not of any individual State. However, this is an option that will not be considered by Washington given that its claim of 50+ governments recognising Guaidó is countered by at least 120 governments of the non-aligned Movement that have explicitly recognised the legitimate government of Nicolas Maduro.

Concluding thoughts.

Clearly Guaidó has a political vision of Venezuela as the US backyard. He has proven that much with his visit to Washington. This is a tragic attitude that feeds into the on going Hybrid War approach towards Venezuela. At present, his photo-ops with foreign dignitaries is working against him in the eyes of those Venezuelans who aspire for a

sovereign and independent Venezuela as an organic member of a multipolar world. He seems to forget that he needs the support of Venezuelans in Venezuela if he wants to be president of the country by democratic means and not by means of a Bolivian-style coup.

The current Maduro government has been given a strong anti-imperialist mandate by the engaged political majority in Venezuela through a widely accepted fair election in 2018. This is a primary component towards building Hugo Chavez's Socialism of the 21st Century. The goal has not changed and the project is on course. Washington's relentless determination to destroy the project confirms the unipolar and imperial view of the US in the hemisphere.

Now Guaidó must return to Venezuela. He might have to sneak back in via Colombia by land-crossing as he did when he left. It is not clear what the Venezuelan government will do following his leaving the country against a travel ban. Elliott Abrams has already "warned" the Maduro government in case any action should be taken against Guaidó.

Given the deep divisions within the Venezuelan opposition, upon his return to Venezuela Guaidó must confront that reality and he should not fear the actions of the Maduro government, rather the actions of his own opposition "allies".

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