

Britain Warned Against ‘Coup-mongering’ in Venezuela After Embassy Discovery

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Venezuela has warned Britain against “coup-mongering” after the discovery of a “Venezuelan reconstruction unit” in the Foreign Office.

Demanding an urgent explanation, Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza lodged a formal complaint with ambassador Duncan Hill, who the minister said confirmed the existence of the unit and “tried to justify the unjustifiable.”

“We demand that [the UK] abandon Washington’s coup-mongering plans and any destabilising initiative. We demand respect for our sovereignty and the purposes and principle of the UN charter,” Mr Arreaza said.

The unit, headed by former UK ambassador to Venezuela John Saville, is believed to be part of plans to “rebuild” Venezuela and promote British interests after the removal of democratically elected President Nicolas Maduro and the Bolivarian government.

A botched coup attempt involving former US Green Berets working for US-based private security company Silvercorp was foiled at the beginning of May as they tried to enter Venezuela from neighbouring Colombia.

The contract, seen by the Morning Star, detailed plans to kidnap Mr Maduro and replace him with the opposition politician Juan Guaido, who is alleged to have funded the plot.

Mr Maduro insisted that the coup attempt was authorised by US President Donald Trump, who has previously refused to rule out military intervention to topple the Bolivarian leader.

Last month Washington placed a \$15 million (£12.37m) bounty on Mr Maduro’s head and mobilised warships off the coast of Venezuela in scenes reminiscent of when former CIA asset General Manuel Noriega was removed from power in Panama in 1989.

Britain, which recognises Mr Guaido’s claim to the Venezuelan presidency, has a history of meddling in the country.

Last year the British government was forced to deny allegations that it was using a military base in Guyana to train armed militias to overthrow the Venezuelan government.

Questions were posed by the Morning Star after Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman

Maria Zakharova said last August that dozens of Venezuelans had arrived at a clandestine British military base in Guyana.

She said they would “undergo training in reconnaissance and sabotage teams” and would “infiltrate Venezuela, destabilise the situation there and commit various acts, including extremist and terrorist attacks.”

A Freedom of Information request by the Star last year also exposed that the British government was funding opposition media organisations and “yellow unions” under the guise of supporting democracy.

The Foreign Office confirmed that it was bankrolling three “Freedom of Expression” projects in Venezuela – Consorcio Informativo (Information Collective), the Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Prensa (National Union of Press Workers) and the Instituto Radiofonico Fe y Alegria (Radiophonic Institute of Faith and Joy).

All three are known opposition groups committed to the overthrow of the Venezuelan government and regularly produce anti-Maduro propaganda.

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