

Guaido Accused of Hiring Mercenaries Behind Foiled Coup Attempt in Venezuela

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Washington-backed Venezuelan opposition politician Juan Guaido has been accused of hiring mercenaries responsible for two foiled terror attacks, as more details of the plot begin to emerge.

Venezuelan communications minister Jorge Rodriguez confirmed that the former president of the National Assembly signed a contract with the US private-security company Silvercorp.

It was this company which provided two US citizens, Airan Berry and Luke Denman, who were detained on Monday among a number of other US-backed paramilitaries as they attempted to enter Venezuela by boat from neighbouring Colombia.

“Some elements are perfectly clear and others will be clarified even more as the investigations on the dismantled incursion — which had the participation of mercenaries, deserters, drug traffickers, and former green berets — continue,” Mr Rodriguez said.

“There is testimonial evidence about the absolute and real commitment of Juan Guaido and his close partners with aggressive actions,” he added.

Silvercorp was founded in Florida with the mission statement of “providing governments and corporations with realistic and timely solutions to irregular problems.”

It boasts of operating in more than 50 countries and its leader, Jordan Goudreau, a US military veteran, confirmed that Mr Berry and Mr Denman were “working with me. These are my guys.”

Company founder Jonathan Harisch has previously stated:

“The strongest people are not those who show strength in front of us, but those who win battles we know nothing about.”

Testimony from US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) agent Jose Alberto Socorro Hernandez, alias “Pepero” previously exposed links between the US and Colombian governments in an assassination attempt on Bolivarian President Nicolas Maduro.

Mr Guaido and his allies have denied links with Silvercorp. He said in a statement on Monday:

“We demand the human rights ... of the people captured in recent hours be respected.”

The attacks were part of Operation Gideon — a plot which involved the training and funding of paramilitaries in Colombia aiming to start an armed insurrection and overthrow the Venezuelan government.

It was led by retired Venezuelan army general Cliver Alcala who surrendered himself to US authorities in Colombia last month. He was quickly whisked away to the US, leading Mr Maduro to declare him a Washington asset.

“He signed a contract with mercenaries against Venezuela. We knew all his movements and details of the camps and the plans,” Mr Rodriguez confirmed.

Vice President Delcy Rodriguez condemned attacks on the country’s electricity network yesterday. Large parts of Venezuela were affected but power was quickly restored.

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