

# Guaido's Last Ride

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*Remember Juan Guaido? Just a year ago the Venezuelan politician, unknown even in his own country, was tapped by the US government to lead a coup against the elected government of Nicolas Maduro. In a [phone call](#) with no less than Vice President Mike Pence himself, Guaido was told that if he declared himself president the US would back him. So...he did.*

Guaido hadn't received a single vote to be president in Venezuela's election – in fact he never even ran for the office – but such absurdity has never stopped the US government from [backing military coups overseas](#). All done in the name of “democracy,” to be sure.

News of US recognition of Guaido as the lawful president of Venezuela led to an [avalanche of lies](#) meant to bolster Washington's claim that Maduro must be overthrown because he was making war on his own people. The claim that the elections were invalid because of fraud were the product of the Foggy Bottom foghorn, amplified by US government funded entities like the Organization of American States instead of any actual evidence or investigation.

The US government staged several stunts on Venezuela's border with Columbia in attempt to provoke the Maduro government into over-reaction. Washington claimed that much-needed aid was sitting on the border but Maduro had closed it off – a lie easily debunked by the fact that the border crossing had never been open. Washington's tears over the suffering Venezuelans were more of the crocodile variety. After all, an estimated [40,000 Venezuelan civilians have died](#) in the chokehold of increasingly crippling US sanctions and none of Washington's regime changers has raised a whisper about the suffering.

Sadly, many libertarians also fell for the State Department lies about Venezuela. This was all about the “free market” versus “socialism,” they chanted. There was no logic in their mantra. If all of Venezuela's problems were the result of its “socialism,” how would the installation of a leader picked by the State Department set them on the path to freedom and free markets? Since when has the US government given a damn about free markets and weakening the power of the state? If anything, US foreign policy strongly favors concentration of power in governments overseas. A strong central government is easier to strong-arm in a direction favored by US elites.

Besides, if libertarians really hoped to weaken the power of Maduro over the Venezuelan economy they would have put their energy into opposing US sanctions rather than backing the hapless State Department stooge Guaido. Like all sanctions, US sanctions on Venezuela delivered far more power over the economy to the central government: rationing, price controls, more bureaucracy, etc. are all the result of US sanctions.

So back to Guaido. After several [comically failed attempts](#) to wrest power away from Nicolas Maduro, it became obvious that the State Department “experts” were once again believing their own propaganda and using it to drive policy: no one showed up in the street to back Guaido because he had no following inside Venezuela.

Because Washington loves nothing more than doubling down on bad policies – and because they will spend other people’s money with reckless abandon – the US government, realizing that their man in Caracas would never be king, settled for quietly [paying the salaries](#) of the [corrupt circles](#) around Guaido.

Earlier this month the year-long neocon fantasy of a Mike Pence-appointed president ensconced in Miraflores Palace finally came to an end. The opposition-dominated National Assembly had split amidst in-fighting and that last scrap of hope that Guaido clung to as leader of the Assembly was ripped from his fingers when the legislative body voted to oust him from his post. Though opposed to Maduro, the National Assembly was even more opposed to Guaido, voting convincingly end the Guaido era and elect fellow oppositionist Luis Parra.

The US foreign policy establishment, being the hammer that only sees nails, reacted to the end of the Guaido era the only what it knows how: in addition to sanctions across the board on the government of Nicolas Maduro, Washington announced that it would also [slap sanctions](#) on the opposition to the Maduro government!

This is US foreign policy in a nutshell...or should we say “nuthouse”?

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