

US Blocks UNSC Draft Resolution Denouncing Paramilitary Incursion into Venezuela

Russia, China and other countries criticized violations of Venezuelan sovereignty.

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The United States rejected a Russia-proposed UN Security Council (UNSC) draft condemning a recent coup attempt in Venezuela.

During a virtual session of the UNSC on Wednesday, Russian Permanent Representative to the United Nations Dmitry Polyanskiy presented a [resolution](#) calling on member-states to reject the “use of force... terrorism in all its forms and manifestations... [and] the use of mercenaries.”

On May 3 and 4, Venezuelan forces [neutralized](#) two speedboats carrying armed groups off the country’s Caribbean coast. US special forces veteran [Jordan Goudreau](#) claimed to have orchestrated the 60-man incursion together with retired Venezuelan Major General [Cliver Alcalá](#), which was aimed at overthrowing the Maduro government. Venezuelan authorities have made dozens of [arrests](#) in connection with so-called “Operation Gedeon,” [including](#) two former US green berets, Luke Denman and Airan Berry.

Russia’s ambassador later [complained](#) that the resolution was “killed” by the US in “nine minutes” despite the draft containing “no accusations, only support of basic common things.”

For its part, China voiced support for Venezuelan sovereignty while blasting US sanctions against Caracas. Other countries, including Indonesia, South Africa and Vietnam, also criticized meddling in foreign countries’ affairs and voiced support for dialogue.

US representative Kelly Craft “categorically” denied any involvement in Operation Gedeon, accusing Russia and Cuba of “violating Venezuela’s sovereignty” by maintaining military cooperation agreements with the Caribbean nation.

The UNSC session came on the heels of fresh revelations concerning the thwarted invasion.

On Monday, Communications Minister Jorge Rodríguez disclosed a series of leaked audio recordings allegedly involving Alcalá, Gedeon commander Antonio Sequea, and other individuals discussing the plans.

Rodríguez showed testimonies from Berry and Denman revealing the operation’s supposed ties to Colombian drug traffickers. According to the minister, the funding for the paramilitary training camps in Northern Colombia was funnelled through the Futuro Presente NGO

belonging to opposition politician Yon Goicoechea.

A longtime leader in the hard-right Popular Will party, Goicoechea was [awarded](#) the US \$500,000 Milton Friedman Prize for Advancing Liberty in 2008. He was [arrested](#) in 2016 for alleged possession of explosives and [released](#) a year later. Venezuela's Attorney General announced a warrant for his arrest on Thursday.

Goicoechea, who is currently outside Venezuela, has denied the charges, claiming he is no longer involved with Futuro Presente and accusing the government of being behind Operation Gedeon.

Opposition leader Juan Guaido had likewise dismissed it as a false flag, before a leaked contract between the opposition and Goudreau led him to shift the [blame](#) to his advisors J.J. Rendon and Sergio Vergara. Both have since resigned.

Following his [self-proclamation](#) as "interim president" in January 2019, with support from Washington and its allies, Guaido has led several unsuccessful attempts to [oust](#) the government. A series of scandals have seen his popularity drop, with other opposition leaders reportedly [lobbying](#) Washington for a leadership change.

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Featured image: A host of countries urged respect for Venezuelan sovereignty at the UN Security Council on Wednesday. (UN/Mark Garten)

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