

US 'Looking Very Carefully' at Silencing Socialist News Network Telesur

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US Special envoy for Venezuela Elliott Abrams has said that the US is “looking very carefully” at taking “measures” against Telesur, in the latest threat to the socialist news network.

Mr Abrams said yesterday that the Trump administration was considering a move against the broadcaster as Washington tries to increase pressure on Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

“I don’t have any announcements to make with respect to Telesur but we are looking very carefully at it, because we have had many reports that Telesur is not actually a news source,” Mr Abrams said.

Juan Guaido, the hapless leader of a failed coup against Mr Maduro, has also advocated shutting down Telesur by blocking its signal.

Mr Guaido alleged last month, without providing any evidence, that the television channel supported terrorism.

He was branded a “lackey of the empire” as his failed efforts were condemned by journalists and academics who said that defending Telesur, launched in 2005 as “a Latin socialist answer to [US news channel] CNN,” was their obligation.

Venezuela has demanded action from the International Criminal Court against Washington’s punitive sanctions regime, which Caracas says amounts to crimes against humanity.

Mr Abrams is believed to be the main driving force behind the Trump administration’s hostility towards Venezuela.

He was appointed as special envoy to Venezuela in January last year, just days after Mr Guaido unlawfully declared himself as the country’s interim president.

His role in orchestrating bloody regime change across the region goes back decades, including involvement in the attempted coup against the late former Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez in 2002.

As assistant secretary of state under former president Ronald Reagan in the 1980s he gained notoriety as a supporter of some of the most brutal dictatorships across Latin America.

He shrugged off the massacre of thousands of men, women and children by US-funded death squads in El Salvador as communist propaganda, insisting that the brutal regime's record was "a fabulous achievement."

The arch neocon also claimed that the Guatemalan dictator Efraín Ríos Montt "brought considerable progress" for human rights in the country, despite leading a campaign of terror with villages burnt to the ground and indigenous communities massacred.

Mr Abrams was convicted of lying to Congress and withholding information regarding his role in the Iran-Contra affair, in which the US was found to be funding armed militia to violently overthrow the Sandinista government.

President George Bush Snr later pardoned him.

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