

‘Yiiiiikes’: John Bolton Threatens to Send Venezuela’s Maduro to Offshore US Prison at Guantánamo

"Also seems like the Trump administration is expecting tomorrow to be showdown day in Venezuela as protests expected nationwide."

By [Jessica Corbett](#)

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National Security Adviser John Bolton—the neoconservative who’s [played a key role](#) in the Trump administration’s [effort](#) to overthrow the Venezuelan government—suggested on Friday that President Nicolás Maduro could find himself locked away in the U.S. military prison at the Guantánamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba if he [does not](#) soon step aside.

Bolton—who has repeatedly threatened U.S. military action to force out Maduro—made the threat in a “[crazy](#)” [radio interview](#) (mp3) with right-wing commentator Hugh Hewitt about President Donald Trump’s broader policy toward Venezuela, including the administration’s endorsement of self-declared “Interim President” Juan Guaidó, and sanctions [imposed](#) via [executive order](#) against the state-owned oil company, Petroleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PdVSA).

NSA John Bolton suggests Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro could end up in Guantanamo. Also seems like the Trump administration is expecting tomorrow to be showdown day in Venezuela as protests expected nationwide. Crazy interview: <https://t.co/3lnZEUj7ch>

— Eva Golinger (@evagolinger) [February 1, 2019](#)

According to the show’s [official transcript](#), Bolton’s remarks came in response to a question about the various fates of other ousted heads of state:

HH: [Former Romanian President Nicolae] Ceausescu and [former Italian Prime Minister Benito] Mussolini met bad ends. [Former Ugandan President] Idi Amin and [former Haitian President Jean-Claude] “Baby Doc” Duvalier did not. Is that the choice facing Maduro right now?

JB: Well, I tweeted yesterday, you know, I wish him a long, quiet retirement on a pretty beach far from Venezuela. And the sooner he takes advantage of that, the sooner he’s likely to have a nice, quiet retirement on a pretty beach rather than being in some other beach area like Guantanamo.

In a tweet on Thursday, Bolton had urged Maduro and his advisers to resign and accept Guaidó’s amnesty offer:

I wish Nicolas Maduro and his top advisors a long, quiet retirement, living on a nice beach somewhere far from Venezuela. They should take advantage of President Guaidó's amnesty and move on. The sooner the better.

— John Bolton (@AmbJohnBolton) [January 31, 2019](#)

Bolton's comments were quickly highlighted on social media by critics, including journalist Jeremy Scahill, whose [latest episode](#) of the podcast *Intercepted*, published Wednesday, focused entirely on how the Trump administration "is openly engaging in a blatant effort to overthrow" Maduro.

On Hugh Hewitt's show, John Bolton suggested that Venezuelan president Maduro could be sent to Guantanamo <https://t.co/5B85dU44CHpic.twitter.com/feivveWHRn>

— jeremy scahill (@jeremyscahill) [February 1, 2019](#)

"It is a campaign aimed at regime change and it's being promoted openly as an opportunity to steal Venezuelan oil for the benefit of U.S. corporations," Scahill noted on the podcast. "This is not some insane Twitter thought spewed by Trump after guzzling down gallons of Fox and Friends. It's an open imperialism that is being embraced not just by Republicans and Trump supporters, but powerful Democrats as well."

Some top Democratic lawmakers including Senate Minority Whip Dick Durbin (Ill.) have [praised](#) the Trump administration for treating Guaidó as Venezuela's leader. Others, however, have spoken out against U.S. meddling while still criticizing Maduro's role in the economic and political crises gripping his country.

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) [said](#) last week that

"we must learn the lessons of the past and not be in the business of regime change or supporting coups—as we have in Chile, Guatemala, Brazil, and the Dominican Republic."

More than 70 academics and experts [have issued](#) an open letter demanding the administration "cease interfering in Venezuela's internal politics," and Democratic Rep. Ilhan Omar (Minn.) and Sen. Kamala Harris (Calif.) [have called](#) for the U.S. to completely rule out any military action.

Bolton, meanwhile, has maintained his threats on behalf of the administration. Asked by Hewitt on Friday whether he'd requested that the Pentagon draw up plans for military intervention in Venezuela, Bolton responded:

"You are a persistent questioner, Hugh. All I'll say is all options are on the table."

Bolton just threatened Maduro with a stay at Guantanamo. Yiiiiikes. <https://t.co/sbr94fkNMm> <https://t.co/Hylg23mVoi>

— 何々何々何々何々何々 (@Jose_Pagliery) [February 1, 2019](#)

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