

LATIN AMERICA

Trump boasts he wanted to take Venezuela's oil after overthrowing its government

Former US President Donald Trump boasted at a Republican Party rally that he wanted to "take over" Venezuela, and "we would have gotten all that oil". This confirms the sinister motives behind Washington's 2019 coup attempt to overthrow President Nicolás Maduro and install Juan Guaidó.

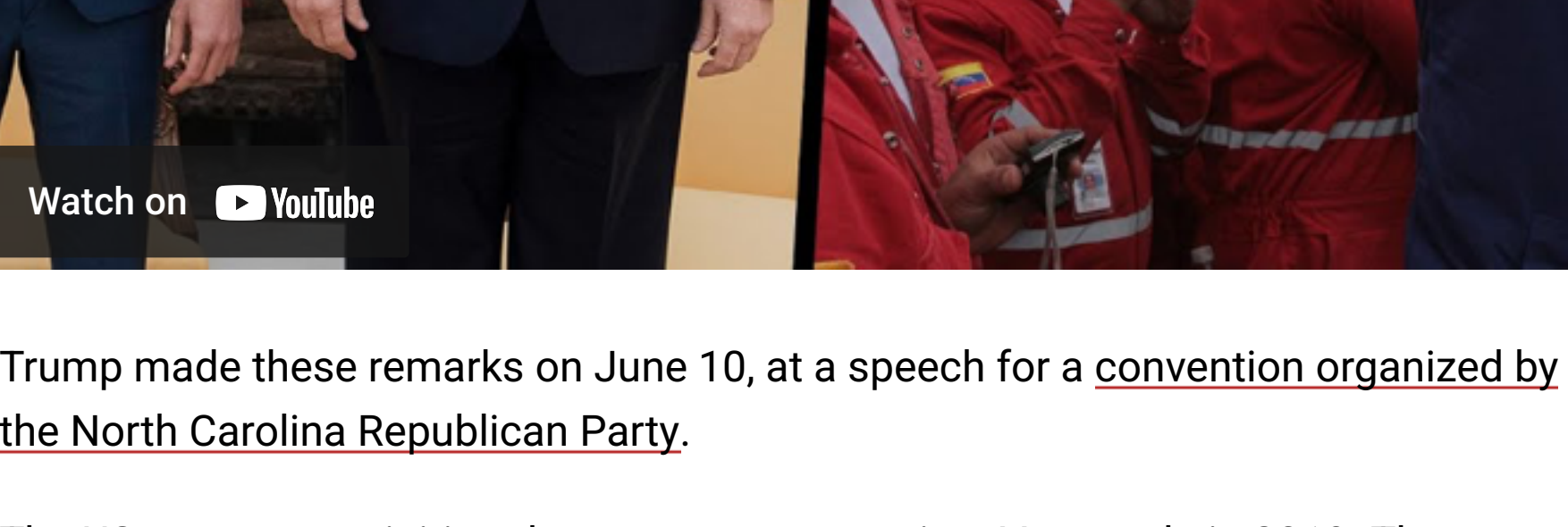
By Ben Norton Published 2023-06-12



Former US President Donald Trump gave a speech in which he boasted that he wanted to "take over" Venezuela and exploit its large oil reserves.

"When I left, Venezuela was ready to collapse. We would have taken it over; we would have gotten to all that oil; it would have been right next door", Trump said.

"But now we're buying oil from Venezuela. So we're making a dictator very rich. Can you believe this? Nobody can believe it", he added.



Trump made these remarks on June 10, at a speech for a convention organized by the North Carolina Republican Party.

The US government initiated a coup attempt against Venezuela in 2019. The Trump administration appointed a little-known right-wing opposition politician, Juan Guaidó, as the supposed "interim president" of the South American nation, despite the fact that he had never participated in a presidential election.

Venezuela has the world's largest known oil reserves – although its crude is very heavy, and in order to be used it must be mixed with lighter crude or diluents, which the country is often incapable of importing due to illegal, unilateral US sanctions.

As president, Trump made it clear that Washington seeks to control the natural resources of foreign countries.

In a January 2020 [interview on Fox News](#), Trump boasted that he was [militarily occupying Syria's crude-rich regions](#) in order to "take the oil":

DONALD TRUMP: And then they say he left troops in Syria. You know what I did? I left troops to take the oil. I took the oil.

The only troops I have are taking the oil. They're protecting the oil. I took over the oil.

...

Maybe we should take it. But we have the oil. Right now, the United States has the oil.

So they say he left troops in Syria. No, I got rid of all of them, other than we're protecting the oil. We have the oil.



Other members of the Donald Trump administration made similar comments.

Trump's neoconservative National Security Advisor John Bolton stated clearly at the beginning of the coup attempt in January 2019, in an interview on Fox News, that Washington and US corporations wanted to [profit off of Venezuela's oil](#):

JOHN BOLTON: We're looking at the oil assets. That's the single most important income stream to the government of Venezuela. We're looking at what to do to that.

We want everybody to know. We're looking at all this very seriously. We don't want any American businesses or investors caught by surprise. They can see what President Trump did yesterday. We're following through on it.

...

We're in conversation with major American companies now, that are either in Venezuela or in the case of Citgo here in the United States. I think we're trying to get to the same end result here.

You know, Venezuela is one of the three countries I called the "Troika of Tyranny".

It'll make a big difference to the United States economically if we could have American oil companies really invest in and produce the oil capabilities in Venezuela.

It would be good for the people of Venezuela. It would be good for the people of the United States.

We both have a lot at stake here making this come out the right way.



Venezuela's massive oil reserves were nationalized by former President Hugo Chávez, who launched the country's leftist Bolivarian Revolution.

Venezuela's state-owned oil company PDVSA used the revenue from the oil sales in order to fund social programs, public housing, transportation, health care, and education.

Academic studies have found that countries with [large oil reserves](#) are more likely to suffer wars and foreign military interventions.

In April 2002, there was a briefly successful military coup which overthrew democratically elected President Chávez. But the leader was so popular that the people of Venezuela stormed the streets, overthrew the coup regime, and demanded that Chávez be reinstated as president.

The George Bush administration was deeply involved in [supporting this 2002 coup in Venezuela](#).

Since then, Washington has sponsored several more coup attempts, including violent riots in 2014 and 2017, culminating in the 2019 designation of Juan Guaidó as supposed "interim president".

The fact that this was a coup attempt was admitted by Trump's national security advisor himself.

In a 2022 interview on CNN, [Bolton boasted of how difficult it was to organize the coup attempt](#):

JAKE TAPPER: One doesn't have to be brilliant to attempt a coup.

JOHN BOLTON: I disagree with that, as somebody who has helped plan coups d'état – not here, but, you know, other places. It takes a lot of work.

JAKE TAPPER: I do want to ask a follow up. When we were talking about what is capable, or what you need to do to be able to plan a coup, and you cited your expertise having planned coups.

JOHN BOLTON: I'm not going to get into the specifics, but uh...

JAKE TAPPER: Successful coups?

JOHN BOLTON: Well, I wrote about Venezuela in the book. And it turned out not to be successful – not that we had all that much to do with it. But I saw what it took for an opposition to try and overturn an illegally elected president, and they failed. The notion that Donald Trump was half as competent as the Venezuelan opposition is laughable. But I think there's another –

JAKE TAPPER: I feel like there's other stuff you're not telling me, though.

JOHN BOLTON: I think – I'm sure there is.

Bolton's 2020 memoir, "The Room Where It Happened", mentions Venezuela and Venezuelans more than 300 times, and has a 35-page chapter recounting the coup attempt in the country, titled "Venezuela Libre" (Free Venezuela).

Bolton wrote that President Trump had repeatedly asked for a military attack on Venezuela.

Trump advisor John Bolton admits planning US coups in Venezuela and beyond

This was further confirmed by Trump's former Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, who wrote in his 2022 memoir "A Sacred Oath" that "Trump had been fixated on Venezuela since the early days of his administration".

"Again and again, Trump would ask for military options" to overthrow Venezuela's democratically elected President Nicolás Maduro, Esper recalled.

Trump's National Security Council meetings on Venezuela "always began with the consideration of military options, rather than on the other end of the spectrum—diplomacy", Esper wrote.

Trump wanted US military attacks on Venezuela, Defense Secretary Mark Esper details in book

There in fact was an [attempted invasion of Venezuela in May 2020](#), known as Operation Gideon.

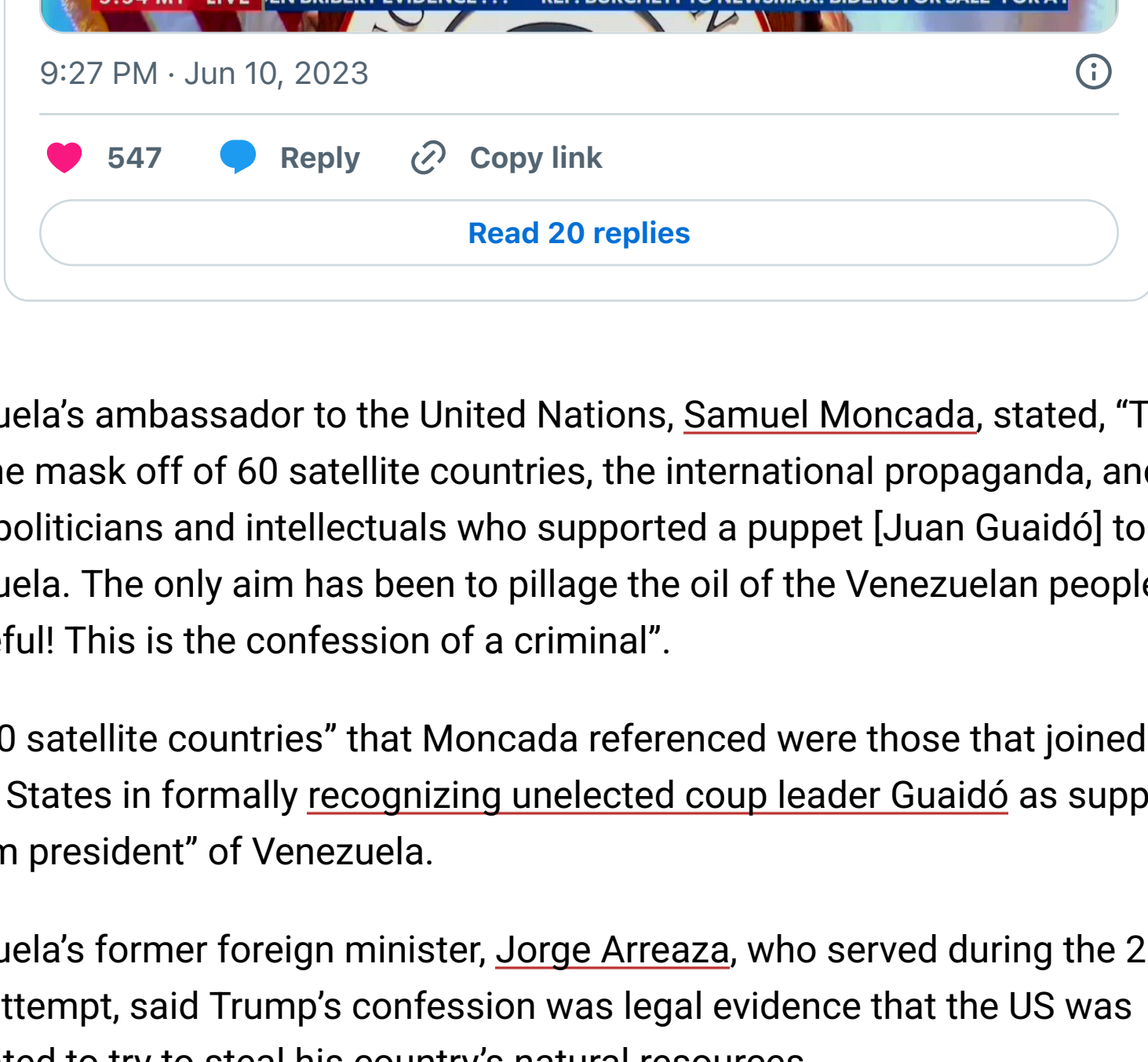
The figures involved in planning this botched invasion admitted they had the support of the Trump White House and were in contact with the CIA, other US government agencies, and Colombian intelligence services.

CIA backed failed 2020 invasion of Venezuela, top coup-plotters says

Venezuelan government blasts Trump's confession

In response to Trump's admission in June 2023 that he wanted to "take over" Venezuela and its oil, the country's foreign minister, Yvan Gil, responded: "Trump confesses that his intention was to take over Venezuela's oil. All the damage that the United States has done to our people, with the support of its lackeys, here has had one objective: to steal our resources! They were not able to, and they will not be able to. We will always overcome!"

Venezuela's vice minister for North America, Carlos Ron, said, "What further evidence do we need? Here's Trump confessing that his aim, all along, was to take over Venezuela's oil. The Biden [administration] keeps his illegal sanctions policy still in place. Venezuela has and will continue to prevail!"



Venezuela's ambassador to the United Nations, Samuel Moncada, stated, "Trump took the mask off of 60 satellite countries, the international propaganda, and all of those politicians and intellectuals who supported a puppet [Juan Guaidó] to govern Venezuela. The only aim has been to pillage the oil of the Venezuelan people. How shameful! This is the confession of a criminal".

The "60 satellite countries" that Moncada referenced were those that joined the United States in formally [recognizing unelected coup leader Guaidó](#) as supposed "interim president" of Venezuela.

Venezuela's former foreign minister, Jorge Arreaza, who served during the 2019 coup attempt, said Trump's confession was legal evidence that the US was motivated to try to steal his country's natural resources.

"The international justice system must act", Arreaza implored.



In this article: [coup](#), [Donald Trump](#), [Hugo Chávez](#), [John Bolton](#), [Juan Guaidó](#), [Nicolás Maduro](#), [oil](#), [PDVSA](#), [Republican Party](#), [Syria](#), [Venezuela](#)

5 Comments

Related stories

Trump's tariffs backfire: India moves closer to China, strengthening BRICS unity

2025-08-16

Trump's blatant attacks on international law are nothing new for the US. They're bipartisan.

2025-07-27

US gov't is very afraid of BRICS and dedollarization, Trump insiders reveal. That's why he's attacking Brazil

2025-07-14

War on Iran is part of US plan for global domination: Economist Michael Hudson explains

2025-06-27