



Journalist Anya Parampil on Venezuela, Bolivia & Update on U.S. Involvement

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Taylor Hudak (TH): Thank you all for tuning in and welcome to another episode of The Source where we interview former insiders, journalists, whistleblowers and policy experts. I'm your host, Taylor Hudak. Today, we are joined by investigative journalist with the Gray Zone Anya Parampil. Anya has reported on the ground from Venezuela, Honduras, the Korean Peninsula and Palestine. Anya, thank you for joining me.

Anya Parampil (AP): Thanks for the invite, Taylor.

TH: So I do want to begin by discussing the situation in Venezuela. But before we get in to the more recent developments, can you provide the viewers with an explanation of U.S. foreign policy in Venezuela prior to the COVID-19 crisis?

AP: Absolutely. As many viewers are probably aware, the Trump administration launched an outright coup attempt against the Venezuelan government in January of last year, the beginning of twenty nineteen, when it announced it was recognizing an unknown politician, opposition lawmaker by the name of Juan Guaido as president of the country. Guaido essentially declared himself president while standing in a public square and this was in spite of the fact he never actually won a single vote for the presidency, they were citing some measures in the Venezuelan constitution in order to justify the takeover. And the US was able to pressure mostly its European allies, of course, Canada as well to follow suit and recognize Guaido. This has resulted in the outright theft actually of Venezuelan assets, wealth, actual wealth stored in the United States and Europe-- an estimated 7 billion dollars worth alone seized in the United States. And the US even before the Trump administration launched this coup and attempted to just impose a separate government on Venezuela, it had already, the US government, had already levied very harsh sanctions, unilateral coercive measures what the Iranian foreign minister describes as financial terrorism against Venezuela, measures which had been in place since 2015 when the Obama administration declared Venezuela to be a national security threat. And these sanctions have had the effect of not only robbing Venezuela of its internationally stored wealth, as I already mentioned, it also had the effect of strangling its health care system, cutting it off from the outside world, making it difficult for Venezuela to import essential supplies such as even basic things like insulin. And this is all part of a maximum pressure strategy the US wages against governments which are independent and veer from its preferred path of international relations, which is essentially subservience to US capital and corporations in order to pressure the population to rise up and overthrow their governments. The suffering that these sanctions have caused in Venezuela are the intended outcome of the policy. Mike Pompeo, the secretary of state, actually let it accidentally slip once when speaking about Iran. He said those very words, something along

