



Iran & Venezuela: The Regime Change Trap

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Glenn Greenwald (GG): Next question is from MARK SNART, who says: "Glenn Greenwald!" Yes, Mark Snart? "This is my request for comment. I know you don't live in Venezuela. I know that". That's very true. A lot of people don't know that, but I do not live in Venezuela. But he says: "But we need to hear about Corina Machado with a System Update about Venezuela. It feels like she may be turning on the Trump administration. Is this the beginning of Venezuela reasserting its sovereignty?" All right, so Venezuela – I want to say it's an interesting case but it was so predictable. In fact, I don't know how many segments on this very show I did on it when it was being proposed and then implemented, but the idea was we were going to go and invade Venezuela, we were going to take down the Maduro regime, we were going to usher in these great pro-Western Democrats who composed the opposition. Juan Guaido for a long time, we called him the president of Venezuela, both parties did, even though he was never the president of Venezuela. We just decided that he was, even though Maduro was running the country. And finally the embarrassment of that and of him had to be acknowledged and he had to be put wherever he is, probably some well-synicured thing somewhere. He's from a very wealthy family anyway.

And the new face of the Venezuelan opposition became María Machado who won the Nobel Peace Prize shortly before the US went and invaded Venezuela in case you were wondering what the purpose of the Nobel Peace Prize was. I don't know. Maybe she's a heroic woman in some people's minds, but she was calling for a US military attack on her own country. I really don't know why that warrants the Nobel Peace Prize. Calling for war should be inconsistent with winning the Nobel Peace Prize. That's what I said when Obama won it in 2009 after spending about four seconds in office where the only thing he did was escalate the war in Afghanistan and they gave him the Nobel Peace Prize. It seemed kind of inconsistent with the purpose. But the purpose of the Nobel Peace Prize, like so many things has been corrupted, to really just promote Western foreign policy.

In any event, the idea was we're going to go and we're going to liberate the people of Venezuela, we're going take down the communist regime, we're going to free them, we're going to give them free and fair elections, we're going to install the rightful president of Venezuela, María Machado. She was so excited. Very, very similar to what happened with these Westerners who are of Iranian descent, who are also these Iranians who live in Toronto and

Los Angeles and London and New York, who were like, "Yes, President Trump, go and free us. We want the Shah back". And the Shah's son was giving addresses with the new Iranian flag behind him as though he were the president. He was like, my fellow people, we are so close to our moment of liberation or whatever. And you know, you're sitting there wondering, okay, these people are calling the United States to go bomb and invade what they claim as their country, even though most of them haven't lived there for a long time. Although María Machado has, but the Shah hasn't been to Iran in 40 years, I doubt he would know his way around Tehran. And that's what they're saying. And they're saying the reason they want this is because they want the United States government to free the people of Iran, free the People of Venezuela and bring them freedom and democracy now.

I don't know why anyone thinks that Donald Trump, that the American people like Donald Trump going to "fix Venezuela", to go and "fix Iran", to "liberate" it, to "free" it or whatever. I thought it was supposed to be America first. We were going to focus on our country, not freeing the people of Venezuela, liberating the people of Iran, but whatever. America first has proven to be a gigantic fraud. I think that's beyond dispute by at this point. But even if you get past that, like, yeah, okay, yeah, that is what we do. We're a totally benevolent country and the purpose of our leaders, their main duty or one of their main duties to go around the world, freeing the oppressed peoples of the world and bring them freedom and democracy because we hate dictatorship so much. Like, even if you think that's our duty to believe that that's why America fights wars – the outcome requires a level of stupidity so extreme, I have trouble believing that actually anyone believes it other than those who sit in front of Fox News all day or watch it or CNN or MSNBC.

The United States does not oppose dictatorships. We love dictatorships. We prop them up everywhere, including that very region. Our greatest allies in the Persian Gulf, all surrounding Iran, are the most savage dictatorships on the planet. Saudi Arabia and the Emiratis and the Bahrainians and the Qataris and the Jordanians and the Egyptians. We love dictatorships. We don't want democracy in any of those places because the people of those countries have views that are antithetical to ours, to our interests. We don't want them to have the ability to express their independent autonomous thought. In fact, we finally had to let an election happen in Egypt after the spring when we pretended that we were against Mubarak even though we the ones funding him for decades and keeping him propped up. Hillary Clinton called Mubarak a close friend of her family. And then we had to let them have an election to pretend that we cared about democracy or whatever. And they voted wrong. They voted for Mohamed Morsi, who was close to the Muslim Brotherhood. And we were like, all right, that's enough democracy, time for a coup. We reinstalled General Sisi, who rules Egypt with a savage, brutal, iron fist to this very day. And we love Sisi because we don't care about freedom and democracy, that's not why we fight wars. We overthrow democratic regimes and install dictatorships far more often than we do the reverse. But somehow a lot of people decided they were going to believe again that we're going to war in Iran because we want to free the Iranian people, bring in the Shah, who was not exactly a Democrat, to put that mildly.

Anyway, we went in, we took Maduro out. Trump loves Maduro's communist vice president, Delcy Rodriguez, loves her, constantly praises her because we're running Venezuela as a colony, basically. Marco Rubio is filling his family's dream of being the viceroy of Cuba and Venezuela. And we have Venezuela at gunpoint, we're stealing their oil. And so now, it's obvious, what should have been obvious all along, which is that the US has no interest in bringing freedom and democracy to Venezuela. We're very happy to keep in place the communist regime that had always been there. And in fact, Trump said today, Venezuela is not ready for democracy or elections. We're not going to have that. Maybe someday in the future, but not yet. And so now you have this María Machado person who was so sure Trump was going to go and put her in power, that when she won her Nobel Peace Prize, she went to the White House and gave it to Trump. She gave her Nobel Peace Prize to Donald Trump. I'm sure people told her, oh, do that, he wants a Nobel Peace Prize so badly, so if you give him yours, he's going to love you so much that he's going to put you in power. I mean, Trump is an egomaniacal narcissist who is easily flattered, but he's not that dumb. He's not dumb. Trump's not dumb. Yeah, it's going to take more than that.

And he went in, took Maduro out, and then they were asking him like, yeah, what about María Machado? And he's like, oh yeah, she's a nice lady. She seems like a nice lady. I don't think she has a lot of support in Venezuela. Exactly the same thing that happened in Iran. His plan with going to Iran was not to take down the regime and usher in the return of the Shah's son or bring democracy and elections to Iran. His plan was, and the Israelis convinced him, to go in and do what he did in Venezuela. Just kill the Ayatollah, the senior leadership, on the first day, and the rest of the leadership would then just submit, and they would run Iran under American-Israeli rule. That was a huge miscalculation, but that was the plan. And a lot of these Iranian exiles, when Trump started saying, yeah, we're going to destroy your civilization if you don't submit, we're going to bomb all your bridges and power plants, a lot of them were like, wait a minute, I didn't think that was the point. I thought we were going to free the Iranian people. What do you mean you're going to destroy civilization forever in Iran and bomb power plants and bridges and cause mass suffering everywhere? That isn't what you promised. And now that dawned on them that the Shah of Iran's son – and they asked Trump that too, what about the Shah of Iran's son? Do you think he can go and rule Iran? And Trump said, yeah, well he seems like a nice guy, but no, he has no support inside Iran. Which is absolutely true. This was by the way exactly what neocons planned with the Iraq war. They found Ahmed Chalabi, who was exactly like the Shah of Iran's son, hadn't been to Iraq for decades, was a servant of the Israel lobby. They were going to install him. And that was the plan, put a puppet regime in place in Iraq. After, of course, the government immediately told Americans we're going to go and free the Iraqi people, liberate them from oppression, all that. And then those Iraqi exiles found out they're not getting anywhere near power. The United States government didn't have that ability, didn't know that intent, didn't have that concern. And it's amazing to watch.

So now you have María Machado who has to deal with the fact that what Trump is actually doing is stealing Venezuela's oil for the United States, not for the people of Venezuela. He announced this oil deal, which is like putting a gun to somebody's head and saying, hey, this

house that you have, it's beautiful. It's worth around like \$20 million on the market. I'll make you a deal – as you have a gun to their head – and you say, I'm going to buy this house from you for \$800,000. And you're going to get the \$800,000. I'm going to get this house, I'm going to renovate it, and I'm going to let you have one third of the basement after it's renovated. That's basically the oil deal that he just did with Venezuela. And so now she, who called for this war, has to account for the fact that none of it, what she promised, is actually happening. In fact, the natural resources of what she considers her country's have been stolen by Donald Trump and the United States – their oil, their most precious natural resource. And so she had to come out and make a video, which is what Mark Snart asked about where she basically was like, wait a minute. She can't criticize Trump because what does she have if she doesn't have Trump, but she also can't let this deal go without opposing it. And also she realized now she's further away from empowerment as well than ever. So here's part of the video that she released.

María Machado: We still don't know the true scope of this agreement. Who is signing it? What exactly is being signed? Who is putting up the money? Who is providing the guarantees? How will this benefit the Venezuelan people?

GG: Yeah, good question. How will that benefit your people? You know the answer? It won't benefit the Venezuelan people because this war that you begged for, that you gave away your Nobel Peace Prize in order to induce, was never intended to benefit the Venezuelan people. Not even the Venezuelan elites like you. That's what she actually thought. Obviously, Juan Guaido and these people, they come from the upper class of Venezuela, not interested in whatever, taking people out of poverty, not interested in the welfare of the Venezuelan people. They want to participate in the raping and pillaging of their resources so that they get very rich, just like these royal families, these dictator families in the Emirates, and Qatar, and Jordan, and Kuwait, and Bahrain – that's the deal. We'll let you rule our country, we'll let you have access to our oil, and you just make sure that we get extremely rich off of it, and whatever else you want to do, we don't care as long as you protect us, and we'll keep our populations suppressed. Because they're opposed to Israel and therefore they're opposed to you and that'll be our job. We run a police state for you. You give us enough money off the top of the oil revenues to keep us very rich and you basically rule everything else.

That's the deal María Machado wanted to make with Trump. Unfortunately for her, it was Maduro's regime that made that deal with Trump instead. And Trump doesn't care whoever gives him that oil. Why would he bother to deconstruct the communist government in Venezuela, as long as they're doing what he says and put María Machado in? Why would he want that headache? And so that's her real source of anger. And there was an article about three weeks ago in the New York Times as well, about these Iranian exile types, the pro-war ones, the one that was going on CNN with that dumb little flower in their hair. She was like, "it's time to free us, free us, please Donald Trump, free us. We need the Shah back". And now these idiots are looking at the destruction in Iran, the fact that the IRGC and the hardliners in Iran are more entrenched than ever, that the Iranian people are suffering, that they're being killed. And they're like, oh, wait a minute, what happened to the whole thing about freeing?

Can the next people who are in line, like the Cubans in South Florida or whoever is next – it's always these diaspora groups who want the United States to go in and fix their country. I believe the Cubans are next. They have one of those little plastic password machines where you get a number, which is the password. You know, you just get your number and you sit in some dreary basement in the State Department, you're like number 86 and they're on number 83. And you're like, oh, I'm three countries away. And they call you, 86, and it's time for regime change in your country. For those people waiting in that lobby, that dreary little reception area in the State Department, waiting for the Trump administration and Marco Rubio to go in and fix your country: Take a look at what's happened to Iran and Venezuela and realize that all the bullshit that you're telling the people of that country is going to happen, is not going to happen. The US doesn't fight wars to liberate people. They don't fight wars to do anything other than steal resources and prop up puppet regimes. I'm not even commenting on the morality of it. I'm just saying that it is the reality of what the United States does. Yes, you can point to wars, World War II, that obviously led to a lot of benefits. I mean, how much are we going to feed on the propaganda from that war? It's like 85 years ago. And some people will point to the war in Yugoslavia or whatever, but overwhelmingly the US does not go with the intention nor with the outcome of freeing and liberating people or even bringing prosperity to those countries for the benefit of the people who live there. And if you don't understand that about the United States and its foreign policy and its history, you basically understand nothing. All right.

END

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