



WTH happened with the failed Venezuelan coup? Discussing the mercenaries that tried to take out Maduro

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Danielle Pletka: Hi, I'm Danielle Pletka.

Marc Thiessen: I'm Marc Thiessen.

Danielle Pletka: Welcome to our podcast, "What the Hell Is Going On?" Marc, what the hell is going on?

Marc Thiessen: Well, there was an attempted invasion of Venezuela this week.

Danielle Pletka: I can't believe we're even dignifying it with the expression "attempted invasion."

Marc Thiessen: Well, if you define two boats with about 30 to 40 guys on them, one of which was intercepted at the coast on the way in, an invasion, then yes, there was an attempted invasion. This was an operation that was masterminded, and I use the word sparingly, but masterminded by a 43-year-old veteran of the Special Forces named Jordan Goudreau, and he was a well-respected member of the US Special Forces, fought in Iraq...

Danielle Pletka: Three bronze stars.

Marc Thiessen: Three bronze stars, fought in Iraq, fought in Afghanistan, was in Sadr City in 2006, that was some tough fighting at the time. And so he was a competent Special Forces guy, but he put together an operation that makes the Bay of Pigs look like D-Day.

Danielle Pletka: No, it really does. Every day there's a little bit more information about this operation, and with each bit that dribbles out, the worse it looks. I have to say, I don't support the notion that we pay for unbelievably aggressive specialized training for these incredible men and women who become Green Berets and Navy Seals, for them to then leave the military and start becoming mercenaries in an invasion force setup to go into a place like Venezuela. There's nothing about that that sounds like a good idea.

Marc Thiessen: No, there's not. Except the idea of going in and forcibly removing Maduro, which would be a good idea, and the idea of forming an army of Venezuelans to do it. If it was done by the US... even the Bay of Pigs was run by the CIA. This seems to have been, literally, just...

Danielle Pletka: Run by those guys.

- Marc Thiessen: Yeah, run by these guys, and not by the CIA. In fact, there's a [fascinating ticktock](#) in The Washington Post about this whole invasion, which I recommend everybody to read. But at one point they were in a camp in Colombia, and somebody came to them and they said, yeah, we're being backed by all these fighters, these Venezuelan fighters, we're being backed by the US, and they literally had no supplies. They had no food, they were drinking water out of the river. And this guy said to them, "If you were backed by the US, you'd have food." It sounds like it started out with the blessing of President Guaidó, who is the legitimate interim president of Venezuela, who obviously is desperate to do something to change the dynamics there, and was connected with these guys. But immediately discovered that he didn't want to deal with them, something was wrong.
- Danielle Pletka: Something's missing.
- Marc Thiessen: But it begs the question, there was a vacuum to be filled, right? And US policy for Venezuela, when you leave a vacuum like this, somebody's going to step in and fill it pretty badly.
- Danielle Pletka: Well, yes, and they did. I think that what is missing in this narrative is the why. That's what you talked about. Guaidó is desperate, Maduro is still in power, and I think the American people, for reasons that I've always found unfathomable, are just not as concerned about what is going on in South America as they are about what's happening in other parts of the world. Even in the part that I love the most, the Middle East. If what was happening in Venezuela was happening in some Arab country, frankly, people would know a lot about it. And the reality is that what we've got in Venezuela is a nexus of Russian agents, Iranian agents, Chinese agents, Cuban agents. It's every possible bad guy.
- Marc Thiessen: It's like an axis of evil.
- Danielle Pletka: It is an axis of evil. And HQ is down there, and the added overlay in this is drugs. Where you've got terrorists, because the interior minister of Venezuela is a guy who has very well-known, very well-established connections with Iran. The Venezuelans provide passports to Iranian-sponsored terrorists. But on top of all of this, you've got vast amounts of illicit cash sloshing around that's been made by selling drugs to Americans.
- Marc Thiessen: Yeah. I don't think it's actually an overlay, I think it's an underlay. I think it's the foundation of the whole thing. This is not a socialist regime, it's a narco-capitalist regime. It's socialist in the way it impoverishes the entire population of the country, but the real foundation of the regime is narco-capitalism. These guys are multibillionaires who have made money selling drugs and other nefarious criminal activities throughout the region, throughout the hemisphere, and outside the hemisphere. And they're in a position where if they lose power, they lose their criminal networks, and so they're desperate to hold on to power and all these people... the Cubans aren't in it out of socialist solidarity, they're in the criminal enterprise as well and making money out of it.
- Marc Thiessen: And so I'm sure are the Russians and the Chinese and the Iranians. This is all about narco-trafficking and narco money.

- Danielle Pletka: Right. And I think that there was a hope when Guaidó was recognized, and he's been recognized by a lot of countries around the world. There was a hope that this would be the beginning of the end for Maduro, and it really hasn't. Our policy is kind of in a tailspin, well, in a tail drift I guess, because it's going nowhere, bad things are happening, and I don't really understand. So yeah, you're right, of course. Into this vacuum, into this absolute sort of mess of a foreign policy, step these Keystone Cops to try to execute this absolutely laughably ridiculous and ineffective coup.
- Marc Thiessen: So, let's have someone explain to us exactly how laughably ineffective this was.
- Danielle Pletka: Roger Noriega is a visiting fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, where Marc and I both find ourselves. He's our chief of Latin American studies, he's the former Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, he's the former US Ambassador to the Organization of American States, the OAS, he's a former senior Capitol Hill staffer. He's a guy who's been immersed in all of these issues for many years, and he pays a lot of attention to Venezuela. He has great connections throughout Latin America, and that includes Venezuela. We're lucky to have him.
- Marc Thiessen: Roger, welcome to the podcast.
- Roger Noriega: My pleasure, thanks for the invitation.
- Marc Thiessen: All right. So, you are our resident Venezuela expert here at the American Enterprise Institute. We just had a failed invasion of Venezuela, an attempt to dethrone the Maduro regime. Some are comparing it to the Venezuelan Bay of Pigs.
- Danielle Pletka: I think it was less successful than the Bay of Pigs, Marc.
- Marc Thiessen: Is it possible to be less successful than the Bay of Pigs?
- Danielle Pletka: I don't know. They were, though.
- Marc Thiessen: Roger, what the hell happened?
- Roger Noriega: Well, they're calling it the Bay of Piglets, some are, as a matter of fact. On May 3rd, pre-dawn, a couple of small boats landed near Caracas on the Caribbean coast of Venezuela. On board were several US Special Forces retired, as well as about two dozen Venezuelans. Their mission was to enter Caracas, apparently to capture Nicolás Maduro, the dictator there, and supposedly get him to the airport and fly him back to the United States to stand trial on indictments for narco-trafficking. Unfortunately, one of the boats didn't actually even make it to the shore, because it was detected immediately by coastal forces. And obviously, the mission, having been infiltrated and detected, the Venezuelan authorities were waiting with their camera crews to capture this ignominious attempt to invade Venezuela.
- Roger Noriega: Immediately, fingers started pointing. The interim president, Juan Guaidó, accused the regime of a ruse. It wouldn't be the first time that the regime came up with some sort of a diversion, or self-coup, or an attack that they used to justify crushing the opposition. In this case, it turns out that Juan Guaidó's representatives, and maybe him personally, signed a contract in October 2019 with a US Special Forces veteran with the aim of toppling the regime. Training several hundred forces was the original plan, and entering the country, and fomenting a rebellion in the country, generating

some momentum and fomenting an overall popular rebellion as well as rebellion within the military.

Roger Noriega: The plan went terribly wrong. Guaidó apparently met with the guy last fall, but almost immediately because they detected that he was sort of an erratic figure, they broke off communications and relations with him. Unfortunately he kept going. And in his bid to press the case and to get paid, he says in his video declarations, he went forward with this ill-fated attack. The sad part of it is that Venezuelans have a right to fight for their own freedom, and there were prominent people, and some veterans and others that were a part of this crew. I don't know what occurred to them when they set out on that mission. But they were fighting for their country.

Roger Noriega: And certainly the United States and a majority of the countries in the world do not recognize the legitimacy of the Maduro regime, and they might have expected some kind of support from the United States intervening once they started this attack, but of course, that never came because the United States was apparently in the dark when they set forth this plan and decided to go forward, apparently in coordination with very few people on the ground, even with the political opposition.

Danielle Pletka: So Roger, let me just ask you a few details about this, because obviously there's been a bunch of explainers in the press about what happened. And the Maduro regime has obviously accused the Special Forces, Americans who they arrested, of acting on behalf of the US government. Secretary of State Pompeo has denied that. Are you saying that this contract got signed by the man we recognize as the legitimate leader of Venezuela in November of last year, and we didn't actually know that this was going on, and didn't know that these... I hate to call them idiots, but I don't quite know what to call them... these gentlemen, these veterans, were actually training in Columbia? We didn't know this?

Roger Noriega: Well, I don't know what we knew, and Congress will certainly be looking into this. But apparently, Guaidó claims that he didn't sign a document. That's disputed by several people. We know he's on videotape talking with the guy at least once, a surreptitious tape, and there were several other meetings between Guaidó and this Goudreau, essentially the mercenary who was leading this effort. But Guaidó apparently was either caught by surprise or thought he could get away with denying it. I think it's rather remarkable that US officials weren't able to monitor what Guaidó was up to well enough, or to detect what was going on. Apparently there was one report that the CIA folks tried to intervene with these people and say, this is crazy, you need to call it off.

Roger Noriega: And why the US government thought this was a good idea, or didn't have enough pull with Guaidó to have him reconsider having these rogue characters involved with his government is unknown, but I'm sure that people will try to get to the bottom of that.

Marc Thiessen: One thing that fascinated me in reading The Washington Post's account of this was that this guy, Goudreau, who was, by the way, three bronze stars, combat veteran, was in Sadr City in 2006 in some of the worst fighting. He was a serious fighter. I don't know how serious he was after fighting when he came back. But he was apparently, according to the Post, introduced to the Venezuelan opposition in south Florida in April 2019 by Keith Schiller, who was Trump's bodyguard.

- Danielle Pletka: I wish you all could see my face. I missed that little nugget. What the hell?
- Marc Thiessen: The Washington Post says, "It was in a meeting with the opposition representatives in south Florida in April 2019 that his interest began to deepen in Venezuela, Goudreau was taken to the meeting by Keith Schiller, a former longtime bodyguard for Trump who worked in the White House in 2017, according to several people familiar with the events." And it says that, "Schiller didn't know Goudreau before inviting him, according to a person close to Schiller, but had given his name by a mutual acquaintance. And after the meeting the person said Schiller concluded there was no business opportunities and severed contact with him and the Venezuelans." But he was introduced to the Venezuelans by Trump's bodyguard.
- Roger Noriega: Yeah. It's pretty clear that Schiller is looking for business the way people do when they're in the private sector, and I think he walked away from that meeting and didn't ever want to be involved again. I think he showed good judgment. He wasn't involved much beyond that. So there was, apparently when you hear the testimony of some of these people that are being interviewed, a couple of Americans have been detained, they told some of the Venezuelans, well, Donald Trump's behind this. He supports this. There is absolutely no evidence of that being the case, and I think Pompeo and Trump have refuted this pretty effectively by saying if we were involved, it would have gone very differently.
- Roger Noriega: It's very clear this was not a serious military operation, there were not the resources, not the people, not the planning that would have been required or the elements of a serious undertaking. So it was basically a rogue operation. It was set off initially with the support, with a contract by the democratically elected legitimate president of Venezuela, and they lost control of the operation and the guy just went forward without any coordination with any authorities.
- Danielle Pletka: So, one of the suggestions that's been made in some of the coverage is that this operation was infiltrated from the beginning. And I know that you have said, certainly to me, to others, and I know to the Trump administration as well, that the Guaidó effort is completely infiltrated by Cuban intelligence. I want to talk to you especially about the role that the Cubans are playing. Mary Anastasia O'Grady, who has a column on the Americas in The Wall Street Journal, had a very good piece, the headline really says it all, "[How Cuba's Spies Keep Winning](#)." So, talk to us a little bit about A, the Cubans and this operation, and then B, the Cubans in the broader sort of opposition and then Maduro context.
- Roger Noriega: The Cubans have played a shadowy role in Venezuela for 30 years. After Chavez was elected in 1998, they were a resource to him, and after a coup attempt against him in 2002, they essentially took over the internal security apparatus in Venezuela, where they monitored the military and Chavez's allies as much as they did the opposition. And they play more than an intelligence role. They basically manage key agencies of the country, the cadastral services. If you want to go register a business, you're just as likely to run into a Cuban clerk.
- Roger Noriega: So they have a presence, probably conservatively 15,000 people on the ground. They run the internal security apparatus there, they provide strategic advice to Maduro, to all of his leaders. They also are involved in some of the corruption and drug smuggling, according to sources that I've talked to. And they run operations, aggressive intelligence operations against Maduro's enemies in order to control and contain any threat against the regime. So they play an absolutely essential role. Fidel

Castro wanted to get a hold of the Venezuelan oil fields since the '50s. He was ousted from the OAS in 1952 for subverting democracy of Venezuela. He wanted those oil fields.

Roger Noriega: Well, he's got them now. And he has the largess from the oil industry, a trillion dollars in revenue taken in since Chavez was elected. And involvement in the corrupt looting of the Venezuelan assets, as well as the narco-trafficking using Venezuela as a platform. So it is a cash cow. Maduro is essentially a Cuban agent, he was placed in the presidency, he was made vice president to Chavez before Chavez died. And he was sworn in as successor after Chavez's death was revealed. He's a Cuban figure, and he's their guy. The Cubans have convinced the leadership of the regime that they either hang together or they hang separately, that if they hang together and maintain unity, if they do not provoke the United States per se, then they're sitting pretty.

Roger Noriega: They have nothing to fear. And let's face it, the Cubans have been watching Uncle Sam's trigger finger for 60 years. And they know whether or not we're coming, and at this point, the regime with the Cubans' support understands that it has nothing to fear from the United States.

Marc Thiessen: Well, to follow up on that, you mentioned that Guaidó signed a contract with this guy, and that later laid eyes on him and said, this guy's... I'm not dealing with him. At least that's what the Guaidó camp says. Why do you think that Guaidó felt the need to go out and find a private US Green Beret contractor to take on the regime, and what does that say about US policy?

Roger Noriega: Well, it's very clear that the US policymakers are not willing to even offer options to the president for the use of force. I was staggered the other day when senior US policymakers actually said, we don't favor a coup. Which is extraordinarily remarkable, because we've been trying to, as far as I could tell, foster a rebellion from within the military for three years, that's the heart of our policy, because people do understand that force needs to be used to dislodge these people. Mattis, for example, refused to put any sort of plan for the use of force in Venezuela on the President's desk. And apparently, no one has. I'm not even sure there's been an intelligence finding for us to be more aggressive, because if there were an intelligence finding, I'm sure that the President's enemies on Capitol Hill would be leaking it to the media.

Roger Noriega: So we're essentially trying to leverage this criminal regime out of power using politicians who are, as Dany brought up, completely infiltrated, bought off, corrupted, manipulated by figures of the regime. And unfortunately, the administration folks figured, well, look, these are the cards we have to play. There's a constitutional process, Guaidó has been elected by the National Assembly to be interim president, and these are the characters that we have to work with. But unfortunately, the policy is fatally flawed because virtually every one of these political parties, these political bosses, even among the opposition, are beholden to the regime. They've been corrupted by the regime, they're essentially complicit with the regime. So the day that Guaidó set out to do something like this, I'm sure that the regime knew about it.

Marc Thiessen: Well that seems obvious, since they met them on the beach.

- Roger Noriega: A year ago, there was another phony coup orchestrated by a billionaire bagman of the regime. The opposition bought it then. But I heard about that a month before it happened. And if I heard about it a month before, certainly Maduro and the Cubans and the Russians knew about it three or four months before. So you're not going to be able to defeat the criminal regime, whose leaders have been indicted in the United States, who understand that they either hang together or they hang separately. And you're not going to be able to take their loot into exile. So it is I think a fact that forcefully we were required to dislodge that regime. And we're just going to have to wait and see how horrible it gets in terms of stability in South America and Central America, and narco-trafficking, and support for terrorism, and losing a bulwark ally like Colombia before the United States does what has to be done and deals with that regime.
- Dany Pletka: So Roger, two questions. The first one is, why has the Trump administration put all of its eggs in the Guaidó basket? That seems to be a mistake. I've seen memos that you've written where you detail the figures who surround him who are either beholden to the regime, or under indictment, or about to be under indictment. I don't get that. That's number one. And based on all the evidence on the ground, he certainly has not been effective. But number two is, what should we be doing? So, deal with the first one quickly and then tell us what we're supposed to do.
- Roger Noriega: Well, as I said, the Venezuelan constitution says that the head of the National Assembly is the interim president when there's a vacancy. They declared a vacancy because Maduro was deemed to be a usurper. He didn't hold office legally, so voila, here's your interim president recognized by 60 countries, Juan Guaidó. That's a constitutional solution. The National Assembly is elected, by the way, I said that Guaidó was elected, he wasn't elected president, he was elected as a member of the National Assembly, by the National Assembly to be the interim leader of the country. So that's the constitutional process, right, and we're able to make a case to the international community that he's a legitimate representative. The problem with this is, from the very beginning, the US diplomats knew or should have known that the chieftains of these political parties, which really have almost zero following in the country, per se, are bought off by cronies of the regime.
- Roger Noriega: And that they communicate almost real-time on not only what they're thinking but what other opposition leaders are thinking and what, unfortunately, the Americans are thinking. I talked to a senior US official six months ago who said, look, we can't do anything effectively as long as these people are involved, because everything that we do or say will leak to the regime. So that is the Achilles heel of this process. And what we should be doing, in my opinion... frankly, we're doing an awful lot of these things, President Trump has been very clear that that regime should go, and it's a threat to the United States. And I think he believes that. I think he sincerely has carried that thought from day to day, at least from year to year. Unfortunately, the ground game is completely incompetent.
- Roger Noriega: And this is not Pompeo, these are not the political appointees. The career people, the career foreign service officers, are at the heart of this policy. It's their drinking buddies from Caracas who are at the heart of the opposition, right? And I think that, unfortunately, it's completely inadequate. They should know better, US intelligence should know better, and the career people, the foreign policy establishment, has dropped the ball here, and they have a learning curve as flat as the Kansas plains. They haven't learned anything from the fact that the April 30 coup last year was a phony rebellion. On the other hand, the Department of Justice came through with

these indictments against a dozen Venezuelan leaders, including Nicolás Maduro, Diosdado Cabello, the Minister of Defense Padrino Lopez, and another guy, Tareck El Aissami, with ties to Hezbollah and the Iranians.

Roger Noriega: So those indictments, that's a very impressive result of nearly a decade worth of work by US prosecutors against that target. We see the Treasury Department hammering away at targeted sanctions against leaders of the regime. So those folks have performed very well. I hate to say it, but where I think the policy is lacking is creativity on the part of US diplomats. And it's because they are absolutely allergic to the idea of the use of force. And you know what, that's a good thing. President Trump was elected to put an end to military adventures, and I think that if we do go in, and I think we're going to have to eventually, frankly, it's going to have to be sort of a Noriega style thing, get in and get out.

Roger Noriega: And that means right now, the sell-by date's over on Guaidó, frankly. What was left of his credibility, he's lost over this thing. We should let this kind of political crowd, this collaboration, this opposition sort of fade into the background, start working with new political voices, new social groups, to say that the US is serious about making a change and changing the way business is done in Venezuela. And we're going to have to work with some of these people to come up with a transition plan to demonstrate that they can help recover the country and rebuild the country.

Marc Thiessen: So Roger, exit question. So you're in the Oval Office with Donald Trump, and you know that he likes very short briefings, to the point. He says, "What should I do in Venezuela?" Give us your three point answer.

Roger Noriega: Well, muffled through my mask and standing six foot back, I would tell him, and this is really what I would say... "Mr. President, you've been right about Venezuela. You're right that the Venezuelan people are great people. A lot of the people that you've met. Venezuela is a great country. It is being held hostage by criminal gangs supported by Cuba, Russia, and China, and abetted by the Iranians and used by terrorist groups and narco-traffickers to wage asymmetrical war against US interests. This will only get worse until we decide to solve this problem decisively. We need to use a proportionate level of strategic force against fugitives from US indictments, the leadership of that regime."

Roger Noriega: "We need to lay the groundwork for transition planning so Venezuelans are prepared to step in and run the country. And we need to have a plan to reactivate the economy, which will mean a trillion dollars in contracts for US businesses and jobs as we reactivate the oil-rich economy in Venezuela. This will pay off dividends for us, and you could probably ask the Venezuelans to pay for it."

Danielle Pletka: Oh, my god. Unlike the Mexicans and the wall. What a great idea. That surely will appeal to the President. Roger, thank you for laying this all out for us, we're really grateful that you were willing to take the time to do it. I still frankly can't believe that this happened the way it happened. It's like the stuff of an HBO series, not the stuff of a sovereign nation. But I really appreciate you taking the time to explain it to us.

Roger Noriega: My pleasure.

Marc Thiessen: So Dany, I think Roger's briefing for the President at the end there was pretty good, very quick summary of what we ought to be doing.

- Danielle Pletka: And what's at stake. That's also the key, is what's at stake, how much money there is down there that's being wasted or worse yet, siphoned into the hands of drug lords and foreign terrorists.
- Marc Thiessen: One of the problems is we're trying to do in Venezuela what has succeeded in some countries, but won't work in Venezuela, which is you just flip the right guy, and convince somebody to turn on Maduro and they'll kick him out and replace him and then we'll be able to start over with a new government. And okay, some of these guys are bad, but we do this in the Middle East all the time, we've done this throughout history. We're used to dealing with not-so-great guys. The problem is, then you just end up with a new figurehead for the same thing, which is this narco-capitalist/socialist regime. What we really need to do is to... there's going to have to be force involved, it doesn't have to be primarily US force, it can be Venezuelan forces. But there's enough young Venezuelans out there who are desperate to change the course of their country, who would be willing to take the lead on this kind of thing.
- Marc Thiessen: Trump sort of models himself on Ronald Reagan in the sense that he was the... Reagan used force less than probably any president in modern times, followed a policy of peace through strength, but even Reagan supported the contra operations in Nicaragua. He supported freedom fighters throughout Latin America. I don't know why we shouldn't go back to that kind of model.
- Danielle Pletka: I think the problem for us is that we haven't been able to figure out who the good guy freedom fighters are. We put a lot of hope in Guaidó, and frankly he's been...
- Marc Thiessen: You make them, you create them.
- Danielle Pletka: He's been pretty feckless. It's hard, and the United States hasn't been in the business of doing this for a long time. You know I agree with you, my view is that if people...
- Marc Thiessen: We did it in Syria.
- Danielle Pletka: We did it in Syria, but we had a group, we had the Kurds. Maybe we could bring the Kurds to Venezuela, because frankly, they were outstanding.
- Marc Thiessen: Yes. I'm sure they'd love to leave. How about we take you to an oil-rich country that's very, very, very far away from ISIS and Turkey?
- Danielle Pletka: It's a total bank shot.
- Marc Thiessen: I mean, look, the Iranians are there, the Chinese are there, the Russians, why not the Kurds?
- Danielle Pletka: Exactly. Listen, it's actually not the craziest idea. Those kinds of things have happened historically. I think the challenge for us...
- Marc Thiessen: If it happens, if a Kurdish force lands in Venezuela, I just want the record to show the first time it was mentioned was on this podcast.

- Danielle Pletka: It'll be called the Thiessen Invasion. Fear not. But I digress. I think that the challenge for us is the one that both Roger and Mary Anastasia O'Grady in *The Wall Street Journal* laid out, and that is that we need to be pretty focused to have this happen. One of the reasons why the Reagan doctrine was successful in supporting opposition against Soviet proxies in places like Angola, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, and elsewhere is because you had a whole of government approach. You had the CIA, you had the State Department, you had the Defense Department, you had the White House. You had all of those guys engaged. It's been a long time since we brought a whole of government effort to almost anything, including the coronavirus.
- Danielle Pletka: Part two of the problem there, I think is that we underestimate our enemy. People are used to thinking of Cuba as some craptastic little country down there where the biggest fight we can have is whether Americans should go on vacation and support the communist regime there or not. And the reality is that just as hapless as they may appear, Cuban intelligence is very capable. And they are everywhere. They've had 60 years to infiltrate pretty much every government they've wanted to, and they've done that very, very effectively. And I don't think we are enough on our game at this point to actually get this done.
- Marc Thiessen: I think we need to get on our game, because it's important and we are also in a situation that's very similar to the Reagan years. So Ronald Reagan came into power after the US withdrawal from Vietnam when there was absolutely no appetite for America to go invading other countries and overthrowing regimes, and yet we faced security challenges that we needed to address. And he came up with this innovative doctrine which we called the Reagan Doctrine, which is that we'll support freedom fighters in other countries, we'll provide them with assistance, we'll provide them with weapons, we'll provide them with training, we'll provide them with intelligence, and let them liberate their own countries.
- Marc Thiessen: I don't see why President Trump shouldn't adopt the exact same situation now. America's tired of wars, as he said. After Iraq, after Afghanistan, after all these things, no appetite for going and invading countries. Let's help find some Venezuelans and... but they're not just going to appear on our doorstep, we need, as you say, a whole of government approach to recruit the right people, to find the right people, and let's get rid of this guy.
- Danielle Pletka: Amen, I'd love to see us do it. He represents a real threat, and I don't think we take it seriously enough. And all you need to do is look at the drugs that are coming into this country. All you need to do is look at the amount of money that is washing around in Caracas to understand that this is an enormously serious problem that we ought to be dealing with.
- Marc Thiessen: We've talked about how, and we're going to have a podcast on this soon, about how the deaths of despair that are going to come from this COVID lockdown, right? The virus came from China. The drugs that are going fuel the deaths of despair are coming through the Venezuelan corrupt regime. And they're both threats to this country, and we need to address both of them,
- Danielle Pletka: Well, amen to that. We've decided what the policy should be. Now it's up to all of our listeners to make sure...
- Marc Thiessen: Go execute!

Danielle Pletka: Ensure this gets executed.

Marc Thiessen: Onward!

Danielle Pletka: Exactly. We'll be holding your coat all the way. Thanks guys for listening, stay safe, have a cocktail for us. Cheers.