

Venezuela (by Hodey Johns)

- The Crisis
 - The failure of socialism
 - Even the New York Times released an article called “Yes, Venezuela is a Socialist Catastrophe”
 - If Venezuela took only its oil production, sold it on the market, and split it amongst all of its citizens, their citizens would be the fourth richest people in the world. That is with NO other form of economic gain.
 - Instead, they are now among the poorest. Of all countries outside of Africa, only Afghanistan has a worse standard of living. Even Honduras topped Venezuela in shelter, food, and water supplies
 - They have just begun rationing toothpaste
 - They have begun to print money to account for their debts
 - Since 2000, their inflation rate had never been above 40%. In 2018, their inflation rate is 1,300,000%
 - At the beginning of 2018, one dollar would have got you less than 20 Bolivars (their currency)
 - At the end of 2018, one dollar would get you 1,575 Bolivars
 - The economy is crumbling
 - For the last 5 years, their GDP has been negative, a feat even marvelled at by the poorest countries in the world
 - For the last 3 years, their GDP has lost between 16 and 17% each year.
 - To put that in perspective, GDP measures stuff and services. Imagine that you lost 50% of everything you owned over the last 3 years. That is what the citizens are going through
 - The USA, to almost no applause, actually became a net oil exporter over the last year. Without their favorite buyer, Venezuela has had to sell to countries that offer far less than the US did
 - In true American fashion, the US only put sanctions on Venezuela after they no longer needed their oil anymore

- Rampant starvation
 - Eight out of ten Venezuelans report eating less because they are either broke or the rationing has decreased
 - Six out of ten Venezuelans report going to bed hungry consistently
 - The government has begun to cut down on food rations and even available purchase options. Over the last four years, cornmeal, bread, pasta, vegetables, dairy, and fruit have all seen double digit percentage cutbacks
 - Beans and yuca (knock-off potato) dispersion has nearly doubled to compensate for this
 - Nine out of ten people can't afford even the rationed food
- Socialized medicine
 - The waiting lists, even for life saving treatments, are prohibitively long, even approaching years
 - In a particularly sad twist of fate, Venezuela was the first country to eliminate malaria in 1961. Now, in 2019, 10 out of their 24 states have widespread outbreaks
 - They are projected to have over one million cases in 2019
 - The majority of medical administration is provided by doctors and nurses outside of the country that make charity visits
- Falling behind on oil production
 - The USA became a net oil exporter on the back of innovations in fracking and shale oil
 - Venezuela, with its government controlled energy department, oversee gathering oil
 - They have not yet explored either of these advancements
 - They have been declining in barrels of oil produced since 2000
- Population is declining
 - Though leaving Venezuela unannounced is illegal, over three million of them have managed to escape
 - With so much of their population either leaving, declining, or having record numbers of infants die at childbirth, the debt can no longer comfortably expand based on population

- Most citizens, knowing that most infants will starve to death, have stopped having kids
- The Coup
 - Incumbent President Nicolas Maduro
 - Supported by Russia, China, Iran, Turkey, Cuba, Mexico, and the UN.
 - Ouster Juan Guaido (pronounced GWAI-DOE)
 - Supported by Canada, the US, the UK, Brazil, Peru, Chile, and Argentina
 - In a nutshell
 - Under the Constitution of Venezuela, the President of the National Assembly may step in as president temporarily in the middle of a controversy over who should be the president
 - Maduro's election was seen as rigged and even the UN that backs Maduro states the election was a sham (this is all still based on his 2013 election, he is slated for a new election early in 2019)
 - Undercover researches found: "In the Venezuelan case, where the current president (Nicolás Maduro) was elected by a plurality voting system, the systematic distortion of voting behavior in small electoral units was outcome-determinative."
 - This examination found that rural areas with less oversight were using intimidation and fraud to sway the vote. "Outcome determinative" is a fancy way of saying it changed the result.
 - The legislative body swore Guaido in as president on the 23rd of January until an investigation could be completed
 - Maduro has refused to allow the matter to be investigated
 - America's interest
 - Risking our status with the UN (let's be honest, we've financed terrorist groups and usurpers before and the UN didn't do anything last time) the United States has given financial support to the permanent presidency of Guaido.
 - America helped to create part of the crisis to begin with by placing sanctions and trade restrictions on Venezuela

- Like Honduras, the US regulated their trade and, when they collapsed, installed someone friendly to US interests (go back and listen to the Daily about Honduras or the main show about the Caravan)
- A Colombian drone attempted to kill Maduro in 2018. He immediately believed the US government was behind the attack
 - Pompeo denied our involvement. With both sides spewing lies on every other issue, the listener can decide what really happened. Either way, this escalated the US-Venezuelan tensions
- The Trump administration has had its eye on Venezuela
 - From a golf course, Trump casually mentioned a “military option” to get rid of Maduro.
 - Rex Tillerson said he looked “favorably” upon an ouster for Maduro.
- Getting Guaido in might mean avoiding an election, which means a US ally for the foreseeable future
- The Trump administration has already threatened to sanction anybody who might run against Guaido and win

Sources

New York Times - “Yes, Venezuela is a Socialist Catastrophe”

https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/25/opinion/venezuela-maduro-socialism-government.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FVenezuela&action=click&contentCollection=world®ion=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=4&pgtype=collection

BBC - “Venezuela: All you need to know”

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-46999668>

Forbes - “Venezuela’s Economic Crisis Keeps Getting Worse”

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/nathanielparishflannery/2018/03/22/venezuelas-economic-crisis-worsens-in-2018/#34a082f71f17>

The Guardian - “Putting Venezuela’s crisis and US intervention in historical context”

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jan/27/putting-venezuelas-crisis-and-us-intervention-in-historical-context>

CEPR - “The United States’ Hand in Undermining Democracy in Venezuela”

<http://cepr.net/publications/op-eds-columns/the-united-states-hand-in-undermining-democracy-in-venezuela>

PSF - “Was the 2013 Venezuelan Election Rigged”

<https://psmag.com/news/was-the-2013-venezuelan-election-rigged>

<https://www.cato.org/blog/five-misconceptions-about-crisis-venezuela>