



US policy failed in Venezuela, time to move on: expert

US should terminate 'flawed policy' in Venezuela, says foreign policy expert

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U.S. leaders are reluctant to admit that their policy has failed in Venezuela, with excuse-making machinery working overtime, said Ted Galen Carpenter, a senior fellow in defense and foreign policy studies at the CATO Institute.

In his article for news website Real Clear World "Is It Time to Cut U.S. Losses in Venezuela?", Carpenter urged the U.S. administration to admit its policy failure in Venezuela and start acknowledging that it "made a miscalculation and terminate a failing venture."

"Any government facing a probable, high-profile policy failure is always tempted to escalate rather than cut losses. The Trump administration appears to be considering that course," said Carpenter, citing as examples the wars of Vietnam and Afghanistan, where the U.S. insisted on expanding the operations despite no tangible success.

Emphasizing that escalation "typically turns small losses into big ones", Carpenter voiced criticism for investing lives and funds to chase a "fundamentally flawed policy."

Carpenter said the Trump administration could still avoid a debacle in Venezuela by ruling out a military intervention and loosening economic sanctions "since it would needlessly victimize ordinary Venezuelans who already suffer horribly from the Maduro government's incompetence."

Allies lost appetite

Carpenter argued that even Latin American allies that supported the U.S. campaign to overthrow Venezuelan President Nicholas Maduro, were "hedging their bets."

"When Guaido's diplomatic envoy to Brazil arrived in that country, the Brazilian government ostentatiously snubbed her," said Carpenter, referring to a diminishing interest in following the U.S. policy to recognize Juan Guaido, the leader of the opposition movement in Venezuela, as the legitimate president of the country.

The CATO expert stressed that "for all of his flaws" Maduro enjoys the military's continued support, and also has left-wing militias to back his rule.

He advised U.S. officials against replicating the "bitter Iraq experience" when the U.S. forces succeeded initially, but an extended resistance in the country yielded no solid benefits in the long term.

Venezuela has been rocked by protests since January, when Maduro was sworn in for a second term following a vote boycotted by the opposition.

Tensions escalated days later when Guaido declared himself acting president, a move supported by the U.S. and many European and Latin American countries.

Turkey, Russia, China, Iran, Bolivia and Mexico have thrown their weight behind Maduro.