

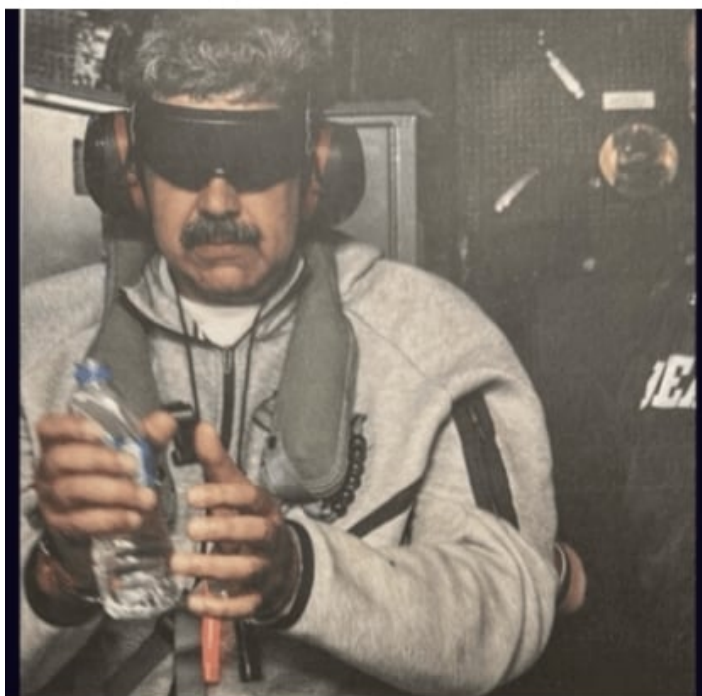
In Norway, the Media are Condemning the U.S. Action in Venezuela

But of course they are.

By Bruce Bawer

Don't get me wrong. I love Norway. I wouldn't have lived here since 1999 if I didn't love many things about it.

But as I've often had occasion to say in print, the ordinary people of Norway are one thing, and its cultural and political elites are another. This is a country whose citizens are by many measures the most Americanized in Europe, but whose elites are second to none in their determination to be seen as anti-American.



Are they *really* anti-American? In a word, no. They travel to New York and L.A. as often as they can, and brag about it. You'll never hear a Norwegian author or filmmaker or musician singing the praises of America, but their greatest dream is to win an Oscar or Grammy or some other prestigious American prize. When the creators of *The Worst Person in the World* (2021) learned that they'd gotten two Oscar nominations, they jumped up and down like children. (I've actually seen the video.)

Over the years, I've been irritated on a number of occasions by the phoniness of it all. But when the news broke that U.S. forces – in an extraordinarily sophisticated operation that had gone off without a hitch – had nabbed Venezuelan dictator Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, the reactions of the Norwegian elites, predictable though they were, whipped up in me a level of anger toward them that I've never felt before.

We're talking here about a dictator who has cruelly impoverished his once-wealthy country, who has imprisoned and tortured and executed thousands of his opponents, who has supported international terror, and whose narcotics empire has cost the lives of countless innocent Americans. We're talking about a man whose capture by an intrepid team of Americans – the youngest of them reportedly no more than twenty years old – has caused Venezuelans in exile to cheer and weep on camera, thanking Donald Trump for delivering their homeland from tyranny.

We're talking, in short, about good triumphing over evil. We're talking about oppression giving way to liberty.

But none of this matters to the Norwegian elites.

At the website of NRK, Norway's taxpayer-funded and reliably left-wing TV and radio network, [Sigurd Falkenberg Mikkelsen, NRK's foreign editor, called](#) the U.S. military operation “a brutal reminder of what kind of world we are now living in. It is a world in which might makes right and the strongest rule.”

How stupid can you get? The entire history of the world is a history of power triumphing over weakness. How was the Third Reich brought down, if not through the exercise of superior military power? How was the Soviet Union restrained from invading Europe? By the fear of a UN resolution, or by the fear of American power?

Mikkelsen also spoke of the action in Venezuela as a violation

of “international law.” Norwegian elites love to appeal to “international law” – which is always being invoked by admirers of tyranny to condemn free countries that take military action against tyrants or terrorists.

In *Dagsavisen*, one of Scandinavia’s so-called “America experts” [took](#) the same dumb line as Mikkelson: the American action in Venezuela, pontificated Dag Blanck, Director of the Swedish Institute for North American Studies at Uppsala University, is “probably a violation of international law” and an example of “pure great-power politics – ‘might makes right.’” Apropos of this latter point, Blanck explained: “small countries like Sweden and Norway have always supported institutions like the UN, precisely because they have given us a guarantee against such attacks from larger and more powerful nations.”

Again, what nonsense! Ever since the Allies ended the German occupation of Norway in 1945, it has been the U.S., not the UN, that has given the free countries of Europe “a guarantee against...attacks from larger and more powerful nations.” In and of itself, the UN has no power to protect anybody from anything. Its power is a total chimera. But among Scandinavian elites it’s a cherished delusion. Scandinavians are fed from infancy on the fantasy of the UN as a virtuous protector. But for the director of an institute for North American Studies to believe in this fairy tale is pathetic.

Much the same tune about America’s action in Venezuela was being played at the website of TV2, Norway’s largest privately owned TV channel. Reporter Mari Linge Five [quoted](#) Vegard Bye, a purported “Venezuela expert,” as saying that “there is little to indicate that democracy is Trump’s most important motive. This [action] has entirely different motives. It’s about control over a part of the world that the U.S. believes it has a right to control. It’s about control of oil.”

Who is Vegard Bye? TV2 didn’t go into detail. I looked him up.

He's [been](#) a national politician for the fiercely anti-American Socialist Left Party; he's been heavily involved with the UN and with NGOs engaged in "development" work in various Third World countries; and, most of all, he's a scholar of Cuba, waxing nostalgically, in his 2017 [dissertation](#), about "the welfare state that was once the pride of the Cuban Revolution" and demonizing both Trump and "the old generation of Castro-haters in south Florida" for their hostility to the Cuban regime. The pro-U.S. website [document.no](#) also describes Bye as a "friend" of Hugo Chávez.

This, friends, is what the legacy Norwegian media consider an objective "Venezuela expert."

People I trust tell me that the only Venezuelans who aren't celebrating the overthrow of Maduro are the apparatchiks. But NRK [managed](#) to find a woman in Caracas, Yuleidys Hernández Toledo, who's angry about it. "What's happening is absurd," she says. "Above all I just want things to go back to normal." Normal? Meaning oppression, starvation, imprisonment, torture?

In the same article, NRK quoted one Juan Lenzo, who claimed that "indignant and angry" citizens were filling the streets of Caracas to demand Maduro's release.

Who are Yuleidys Hernández Toledo and Juan Lenzo? Well, she's editor-in-chief of the government-run media company Diario VEA. He's in local government. Hernández Toledo and Lenzo, stated NRK, share one goal: "a Venezuela free of foreign intervention."

Only government-run NRK would consider these two legitimate observers of recent events.

I fully grant that it would only be reasonable to expect a news organization to acknowledge criticisms of America's actions in Venezuela and to cite reasonable concerns about what comes next. By the same token, however, nowhere in the Norwegian media, in the hours after the news broke about the

Maduros being taken into custody, could I find an honest acknowledgment that Venezuelans both at home and abroad were cheering Trump's action. I don't think I ever saw the word "free" – except in the phrase "free from foreign intervention."

This whole disgusting display, in short, is as appalling as anything I've ever witnessed in the media here – at least since the quick, ugly turn against the U.S. in the days after 9/11 – and, yes, it's made me livid.

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