
While Endorsing Coup in Venezuela, Trump's Rule Weakened as Ally Arrested in US

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Roger Stone, U.S. President Donald Trump's longtime ally and presidential campaign adviser, was arrested Friday, charged with obstruction, witness tampering and making false statements, according to a grand jury indictment made public by U.S. Special Counsel Robert Mueller's office.

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Stone, who has repeatedly said in interviews that he was likely to be indicted, is scheduled to appear at the federal courthouse in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, later on Friday, Mueller's office said.

Stone has faced scrutiny for his support for Trump during the 2016 presidential campaign, when he implied he had access to information obtained by hackers that could embarrass Democrats, including Trump's rival for the White House, Hillary Clinton.

"This has been rumored to be coming down for several months, so Roger and his legal team are ready to fight these charges in court," Michael Caputo, a longtime Stone associate and former Trump campaign adviser, told Reuters. "They can't prove collusion or conspiracy because it doesn't exist, so they're going after him

personally. He will be vindicated."

Stone, who was indicted Thursday, faces one count of obstruction of an official proceeding, five counts of making false statements and one count of witness tampering, according to the Special Counsel's Office.

CNN, in video of the arrest, showed a heavily armed FBI team taking Stone away from his home in the dark just before 6 a.m. local time Friday and Stone surrendering without any issue.

Stone's arrest places Trump and his administration under further pressure as part of the corruption investigation by the special counsel. The news comes as Trump is waging a regime change campaign against Venezuela and its Nicolas Maduro government, recognizing right-wing opposition lawmaker Juan Guaido as the country's "interim president" after he self-proclaimed the presidency in a violation of the country's constitution.

Ironically, while refusing to recognize Nicolas Maduro's victory in last year's elections, Trump himself did not come to power winning popular vote, as the U.S. maintains the Electoral College system which grants presidential candidates victory based on an outdated system of allocating points for states instead of sticking to number of votes as in most democratic countries.

Maduro in fact won the May 2018 elections with a 67 percent of the popular votes against opposition candidate Henri Falcon.

Also, Trump continues to face a major push by opponents, who now control the country's House of Representatives, to oust him over major corruption scandals, unhinged governing style, as well as support for fascist and far-right tendencies in the United States and the world.
