

Venezuelan coup attempt 'directly planned in Washington' – FM

30/04/2019



The Venezuelan foreign minister has accused the US-backed opposition of planning Tuesday's coup attempt in Washington, and said the government would work to keep the peace.

Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza told Reuters by telephone that only around 30 soldiers had supported the coup instigated by opposition leader Juan Guaido. He described the plot as *"another chapter"* of an American effort to topple the government of President Nicolas Maduro.

While downplaying the scale of the uprising, Arreaza said it did not originate within the military, but that opposition leaders planned the event in Washington.

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"It is not a coup attempt from the military. This is directly planned in Washington, in the Pentagon and Department of State, and by [National Security Adviser John] Bolton," Arreaza told Reuters.

"They are leading this coup and giving orders to this man Guaido," he said.

Bolton, a long-time major backer of the Venezuelan opposition, went public on Tuesday with his support for the coup attempt, pledging that *"the United States stands with the people of Venezuela"* while slamming Maduro's *"usurpation of democracy."*

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Speaking to RT Spanish earlier on Tuesday, Arreaza said that “916,050 square kilometers” –nearly the whole of Venezuela– is under the Maduro government’s control, except for “one small bridge and a highway near the military airbase” where Guaido-led opposition and a group of military supporting him are located.

He added that he’s aware that Guaido is already under investigation, but said he could not comment on what steps the judiciary would take next.
