

By Reuters

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John Bolton, a former U.S. diplomat and one-time national security advisor to former president Donald Trump, on Tuesday told CNN he'd helped plan attempted coups in foreign countries.

Bolton made the remarks in response to accusations that Trump pushed a multi-pronged effort to overturn the results of the 2020 U.S. election in a last-ditch - and potentially illegal - bid to remain in power.

Asked about this allegation, the former Trump adviser suggested on Tuesday the 45th president was simply not competent enough to execute a "carefully planned coup d'etat."

Adding, "As somebody who has helped plan coups d'etat - not here but you know (in) other places - it takes a lot of work. And that's not what he (Trump) did."

Bolton served as Trump's national security adviser in 2019 when Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido called on that country's military to oust President Nicholas Maduro, claiming a recent election was illegitimate.

Bolton supported Guaido.

"I can tell you there's a lot going on beneath the surface. The opposition is in constant contact

with large numbers of admirals and other supporters within the Maduro administration."

But Venezuela's military stuck with Maduro, who remained in power.

Pressed on Tuesday by CNN anchor Jake Tapper to elaborate, Bolton said he would not get into specifics, and did not mention Venezuela, but said, "It turned out not to be successful."

Many foreign policy experts have over the years criticized Washington's history of interventions in other countries.

But it is highly unusual for U.S. officials to openly acknowledge their role in stoking unrest in foreign countries.