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Notes from editor (not for publication):

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

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Hundreds protest of U.S. actions in Venezuela

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In Brattleboro, a mix of outrage and exasperation marks
the military capture and removal of Maduro to face criminal drug
charges in New York

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TEXT BODY:

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On Jan. 3, Vermonters woke up to the news of the U.S.
military's attack on Venezuela over the weekend that led to the
capture of the country's leader, Nicolás Maduro.

Within hours, a protest at Pliny Park was organized by
Indivisible Brattleboro for the next day.

11 Despite it being a cold and raw Sunday afternoon,
12 approximately 200 people turned out on Jan. 4 to condemn the
13 attack. Protestors lined the sidewalks on both sides of Main Street
14 near Pliny Park.

15 U.S. forces entered the Venezuelan capital of Caracas
16 overnight Friday into Saturday, and more than 100 U.S. aircraft
17 helped neutralize the country's air defenses, *The New York Times*
18 [reported](#). More than 40 people were killed, according to
19 Venezuelan authorities, though Trump said no Americans were
20 killed in the attack.

21 American troops captured both Maduro and his wife,
22 Cilia Flores, later transporting them out of the country, according
23 to news reports. U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi said Maduro
24 would face [charges](#) in the U.S. of narcoterrorism conspiracy and
25 cocaine importation conspiracy, among other allegations.

26 Well-worn protest signs

27 Unlike the “No Kings” protests last year against President
28 Donald Trump, which were leavened with humor, the Pliny Park
29 gathering — one at least 150 protests held around the country
30 over the weekend, according to the Answer Coalition — was
31 earnest with a mixture of outrage and exasperation, although the
32 People’s Resistance Marching Band again provided the
33 soundtrack.

34 One woman had a well-worn protest sign that dated
35 back to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. She said she taped over
36 the word “Iraq” on the sign so it read “No Venezuela War.”

37 Comparisons to the Iraq invasion were echoed by many
38 at the protest. The popular protest slogan “No Blood for Oil” from
39 that conflict found its way onto several of the homemade signs.

40 A cardboard coffin was carried by two pallbearers. A
41 small Venezuelan flag was affixed to its top and the words “Our
42 Democracy: 1776–2025” were written on its side.

Most protesters stayed on the sidewalk, while a small group led by the band marched back and forth across the Main and High street intersection when the crosswalk sign was on.

Motorists were generally supportive, with only the drivers of a couple of pickup trucks expressing disapproval with either a loud horn or shouted obscenities.

Vermont delegation voices opposition

Vermont's top federal lawmakers wasted little time in condemning the military escalation. They had similarly criticized the staging of Vermont Air National Guard members in the Caribbean to support the military buildup against Venezuela.

On Jan. 3, U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and Vermont Democrats U.S. Sen. Peter Welch and U.S. Rep Becca Balint, all labeled Maduro a brutal authoritarian but said President Trump's attacks on the South American country exceeded his constitutional authority.

"Trump's attack on Venezuela will make the United States and the world less safe. This brazen violation of international law gives a green light to any nation on Earth that may wish to attack another country to seize their resources or change their governments," Sanders said in a statement.

"President Trump's hunger for a regime change war makes it clear he doesn't care about how this unauthorized and illegal action could cause further chaos and suffering in Venezuela. Has he learned nothing from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya?" Welch said in a statement Saturday.

"This could lead us into another forever war, risking the lives of U.S. service members and hurting the economy," Welch continued.

Balint, in her own statement, said the U.S. had made "these horrible mistakes before."

"Americans do not want another war," she said.

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BIO/COATTAIL:

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76 With additional reporting by Ethan Weinstein of
77 VTDigger.

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