

Trump declares Cuba a “national emergency,” orders tariffs against any country supplying the island oil

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On Thursday, January 29, the Trump administration issued an executive order titled “Addressing threats to the United States by the government of Cuba.” Absurdly claiming that Cuba poses an “extraordinary threat” to US national security, the executive order directs the government to impose tariffs on any country supplying the island nation with oil unless Cuba agrees to “align sufficiently with the United States on national security and foreign policy matters.”

Following the US government’s abduction of Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro and its assertion of control over that nation’s oil supply, Trump and his associates believe American imperialism can finally starve the island into submission and bring it back under direct US domination 68 years after the Cuban Revolution as part of Trump’s “Donroe Doctrine” elaborated in last month’s US National Security Strategy.

The Mexican government acknowledged on Tuesday the cancellation of a planned oil shipment to Cuba this month under pressure from the US government over trade talks and threats of military invasion. At a Tuesday press conference, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum claimed, unbelievably, that withholding the shipment was “a sovereign decision” by Mexico’s state-run oil company Pemex, while making mealy-mouthed statements indicating Mexico still supported sending Cuba humanitarian aid.

The *Financial Times* cited data company Kpler’s estimate that the cancellation of Mexico’s shipment would leave Cuba with only 15-20 days of oil at current levels of demand and domestic production.

Cuba imports over 60 percent of the oil it consumes. Domestic oil production amounts to less than 40,000

barrels per day (bpd) of the estimated 110,000 to 120,000 bpd Cuba requires. Venezuela, which in the past sent 100,000 bpd, had reduced shipments dramatically over the years, down to about 30,000 bpd at the end of 2025, according to Jorge Piñon of the University of Texas at Austin Energy Institute. These shipments were cut off entirely by US imperialism’s seizure of vessels bound for Cuba in the run-up to Maduro’s abduction and its subsequent assertion of control over Venezuelan oil.

Mexico and Russia are Cuba’s only remaining significant suppliers. From January to September of 2025, Mexico sent around 22,000 bpd to Cuba before a visit in early September by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, after which they fell to just 7,000 bpd. In 2026, Mexico sent just one shipment on January 9, amounting to 84,900 barrels. Piñon estimates that Russia’s contribution to Cuba’s energy supply was about 6,000 bpd, but its contributions had not been as regular as those of Venezuela or Mexico.

As Cuba relies primarily on fuel oil to power its electricity production, the shortfall has resulted in blackouts of up to 20 hours in many parts of the country, making it almost impossible for many Cubans to maintain refrigerated food or medication. Refuse is collecting on the streets because there is not enough fuel for garbage trucks. Lack of power for fans or air conditioning has led to epidemics of mosquito-borne viruses including dengue and chikungunya, which have reportedly left morgues overflowing.

The reduction in oil shipments has also led to shortages of food, medicine and other basic necessities as the Cuban government had been reselling a portion of the fuel to earn foreign exchange for other imports.

Tourism, the government's biggest source of foreign exchange, has seen visits drop 70 percent since 2018, from 4.8 million tourists down to 1.6 million.

The operations against Venezuela and now Cuba are intimately connected. On January 3, just hours after the kidnapping of Maduro, Rubio threatened the Cuban government saying, "If I lived in Havana and I was in the government, I'd be concerned at least a little bit." A day later, he repeated the warning, saying "they're in a lot of trouble."

He continued, "I'm not going to talk to you about what our future steps are going to be and our policies are going to be right now in this regard. But I don't think it's any mystery that we are not big fans of the Cuban regime, who, by the way, are the ones that were propping up Maduro."

On January 11, after the seizure of Maduro, Trump wrote on Truth Social "THERE WILL BE NO MORE OIL OR MONEY GOING TO CUBA — ZERO!" I strongly suggest they make a deal, BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE." He continued, writing, "Cuba lived, for many years, on large amounts of OIL and MONEY from Venezuela."

At a recent staff meeting at the US Embassy in Havana, Charge d'Affaires Mike Hammer reportedly told those present, "If you don't have your bag packed yet, then pack your bag. The Cubans have complained for years about 'the blockade', but now there is going to be a real blockade."

The *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ) published a report on January 22 based on discussions with senior US officials that the Trump administration is actively planning to carry out regime change in Cuba by the end of the year. According to the WSJ report, the US government is actively seeking out Cuban government insiders who will be willing to cut a deal.

Trump's executive order spells out what would be expected from such a US proconsul in Cuba, namely complete capitulation to its assertion of hemispheric dominance. In particular, the country would be required to cut ties with Russia, China and Iran, characterized as "hostile countries" and "malign actors." The executive order complains that "Cuba hosts Russia's largest overseas signals intelligence facility" and that it "continues to build deep intelligence and defense cooperation with the PRC."

The executive order also states, "The Cuban regime

continues to spread its communist ideas, policies, and practices around the Western Hemisphere, threatening the foreign policy of the United States." At minimum then, US imperialism's proposed collaborators would be presumably expected to give up their rhetorical commitment to socialism, open the economy to American corporations and return property nationalized after the revolution in 1959.

Cuban government officials have appeared in public recently wearing military fatigues while issuing claims that the population is preparing for "countrywide war" in the face of a US invasion. It is clear, however, that they have no answer for what amounts to the imposition of an economic siege. Moreover, it is not at all excluded that elements in the Cuban government, like their counterparts in Venezuela, would be willing to collaborate with Washington to secure their own privileges.

The imposition of a total blockade on Cuba and the threats of military aggression must be opposed by the international working class, and especially the working class of the United States. The fight against American imperialist aggression must start with the building of rank-and-file committees internationally to prepare for mass action, including a general strike to stop the Trump administration's criminal lawlessness at home and abroad.



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