

# Following armed provocation and energy blockade, Trump floats “friendly takeover” of Cuba

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The Trump administration’s starvation campaign against Cuba took a more openly predatory turn Friday when US President Donald Trump publicly floated a “friendly takeover” of the island.

Two days after Cuban border guards repelled an armed terrorist attack by a Florida-flagged speedboat near Cuba’s northern coastline, Trump again refused to comment on the incident. However, he told reporters: “The Cuban government is talking with us ... And maybe we’ll have a friendly takeover of Cuba. We could very well end up having a friendly takeover of Cuba.”

The Cuban government has since provided further details of the February 25 clash: border guards approached the vessel FL7726SH for identification when its occupants opened fire, wounding the Cuban commander and hitting the patrol craft 13 times. Guards returned fire, killing four and injuring six.

Authorities seized assault rifles, 134 magazines with 12,846 rounds of ammunition (5.56x45 mm and 7.62 mm for AKM rifles), pistols capable of piercing bulletproof vests, a drone with two cameras, 10 communication devices, tactical knives, a portable generator, bolt cutters, camouflage uniforms and emblems of the fascist expat group “People’s Self-Defense.” The attackers traveled in two boats until one malfunctioned enroute.

One killed and one injured assailant were US citizens, and the rest were US residents. A seventh suspect confessed to coordinating the operation from within Cuba.

Washington has so far feigned ignorance, with Secretary of State Marco Rubio denying US government involvement and pledging an “independent” probe. Yet, given the US naval deployment—seven Coast Guard cutters and rapid-response vessels 24-36 hours from northern Cuban waters to enforce the embargo—it strains credulity that US agencies missed two heavily armed boats departing Florida.

The attack was not only greenlighted by Washington, but it

is actively encouraging the networks of Cuban-American fascists long tied to the CIA. These forces see the string of US regime change operations internationally as chess pieces aligning. The mayor of Hialeah, a Cuban-American hub in Florida, Bryan Calvo recently boasted to *Politico*: “Look at what’s happening in Iran. Look at what happened with Venezuela. ... You guys are next.”

On Monday, 30 Cuban exile groups signed the fascist “Freedom Accord” for regime removal, jailing officials and installing a US puppet under the cover of a “democratic transition.”

Trump’s remarks, made before boarding Marine One, and as planes were already on the move to bomb Iran and kill top officials, expose the predatory logic: submit or face destruction.

“Marco Rubio is dealing on it and at a very high level ... they have no money. They have no oil, they have no food,” he gloated before boarding.

Earlier media reports indicate Rubio has been holding talks to groom Raúl Guillermo Rodríguez Castro, the grandson of Cuban leader Raul Castro and overseer of the military’s GAESA economic conglomerate.

The Trump administration seeks to install a puppet regime and turn Cuba into a cheap labor source for Wall Street, handing ports, plantations and mines to US corporations while expelling Russian and Chinese influence from the region. This is part of a Hitlerian drive for hegemony across the hemisphere and beyond, including Trump’s efforts to “run” Venezuela, attack Mexico, seize Greenland, Canada and the Panama Canal.

Significantly, the effort to starve Cuba into submission has received bipartisan support in Washington, with no effort from Democratic Party leaders to block the strengthened embargo.

Following Trump’s January 29 executive order declaring

Cuba a US “national emergency” threat and imposing tariffs on oil suppliers, the US appears intent to continue starving the island of fuel despite taking steps for a minimum amount of fuel to arrive.

*Bloomberg* reported last Friday that the Russian tanker Sea Horse, carrying Russian gas-oil to Cuba, diverted away, but Washington has also issued specific licenses to companies interested in selling Cuba Venezuelan oil.

The Liberian-flagged *Eugenia*, a Cuban tanker, was allowed to fill up with Venezuelan liquefied gas in Venezuela on Sunday, as confirmed by *Diario de Cuba*. It is still unclear how the fuel will be sold in Cuba given US restrictions for any dealings with government agencies.

As US warships enforce the blockade and with Cuba not receiving oil or gas since December, director of the Latin America and Caribbean Energy Program with the University of Texas in Austin, Jorge Piñón told the *Nation* this week: “If we don’t see a tanker come into Havana sometime by mid-March, that’s what we call the zero hour. In other words, that’s it. There’s no inventory, there’s no strategic reserves, that’s it, they’re out of business.”

Token gestures mock the suffering: \$6 million US “aid” via the Catholic Church; licenses for private Cuban firms to buy fuel (bypassing the state). Mexico sent limited food/non-fuel aid, and pledges from Chile, Canada, China, Europe and Caribbean nations remain unfulfilled.

Such isolation is a historic indictment of bourgeois nationalism’s anti-imperialist pretensions. “Pink tide” regimes—currently in power in Mexico, Brazil, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Chile—are submitting to Trump’s threats.

Facing collapse, Havana is also signaling submission. Monday’s Council of Ministers meeting saw President Miguel Díaz-Canel demand “immediately” a set of “transformations” to the “economic and social model”: business/municipal autonomy, state downsizing, public-private partnerships and Cuban-American investments. The aim is not only to receive fuel imports but to meet Rubio’s broad demand for “dramatic” free-market changes.

During the speedboat attack, according to an official statement, “there was an exchange of information almost in real time with the liaison at the U.S. Embassy and authorities in Miami.” Havana also stressed its “operational cooperation” with the US Coast Guard on migration, drugs and rescues.

Meanwhile, conditions for most Cubans are increasingly apocalyptic. Economist Omar Everleny Pérez told *El País*: “Today, Cuba has to import almost 95 percent of its food needs; agricultural and livestock production are severely deteriorated. Industrial production is at a minimum and, specifically, sugar production is insufficient to meet export

demands and cover domestic consumption needs.”

UN coordinator Francisco Pichón stressed in a recent report that 5 million Cubans with chronic illnesses risk losing treatment amid the energy collapse, including thousands of cancer patients who need oncology care and over 32,000 pregnant women who lack services.

A Matanzas worker and single mother recently interviewed by the WSWS provided an update, indicating 20-30-hour blackouts and hunger persist:

There has been no change whatsoever. I could tell you right now about at least three very unfortunate cases (including my grandmother’s) of people in hospitals without medical treatment and families looking for money to pay for medicines on the black market at absurd prices. Power outages remain the same or worse, and schools are practically disabled or operating on a half-day basis. I have only heard rumors that they are going to allow gasoline imports to the private sector, but the price of transportation has not dropped a single cent, and as for public transportation, it does not exist.

As Cuba’s “zero hour” looms, the Matanzas worker’s earlier appeal for American and international workers to force an end to the embargo rings urgent. At the same time, to fight against US imperialist aggression and the bourgeois nationalist regime at home, the Cuban working class and youth must build a genuinely socialist, revolutionary and internationalist leadership as a Cuban section of the International Committee of the Fourth International.



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