

White House sends delegation to deliver war ultimatum to Cuba

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Following mounting reports the Pentagon is acting on Trump administration orders to accelerate preparations for military action against Cuba, the White House has dispatched the first high-level US delegation to the island since 2016.

While that earlier visit, led by Barack Obama, took place under conditions of a temporary diplomatic reopening, the actions of the latest delegation bear all the hallmarks of an ultimatum preceding aggression.

The delegation arrived in Havana on April 10 aboard a US government aircraft and presented a sweeping set of demands to the Cuban government. These included a two-week deadline to release high-profile political prisoners, implement sweeping market reforms, expand the private sector and attract foreign investment.

The demands, delivered during what US officials described as a “secret meeting,” were accompanied by calls for compensation to American corporations and individuals whose assets were nationalized following the 1959 revolution.

Washington further insisted on “greater political freedoms” culminating in so-called “free and fair elections,” a familiar pretext for regime-change operations across the globe.

Far from representing genuine diplomacy, these talks recall the pattern employed by US imperialism in the lead-up to military interventions in countries such as Iran and Venezuela: declare the target government noncompliant, and then claim that all peaceful avenues have been exhausted.

Axios reported last week that, in preparing a case for war, the Trump administration issued a five-page report to Congress claiming, without any evidence, that Havana has supplied Russia up to 5,000 combatants for the war in Ukraine.

Senior State Department official Michael Kozak confirmed that the United States is pressing for “drastic

reforms” in Cuba. According to multiple reports, US officials even floated the introduction of SpaceX’s Starlink satellite internet system, a proposal framed as expanding connectivity but which would in practice deepen US technological and political penetration of the island.

According to *Axios*, US officials warned that Cuba’s leadership has only a “small window” to enact US-backed reforms before conditions “irreversibly worsen.”

Cuban officials have acknowledged the meeting. Alejandro García del Toro, a senior Foreign Ministry official, stated that “assistant secretaries of the State Department” participated on the US side, while Cuba was represented at the vice-ministerial level.

Active military preparations are already underway. According to reports by *CiberCuba*, the US Navy has flown at least two surveillance missions using the high-altitude MQ-4C Triton drone in less than a week. The aircraft was detected circling the island on April 17 and again on Monday, based on publicly available tracking data.

These reconnaissance flights are widely understood as precursors to potential military action.

Trump himself has repeatedly declared that Cuba is “next” following US operations targeting Iran, as his administration announces a “Greater North America” doctrine to reassert dominance across the hemisphere.

The internal situation in Cuba, meanwhile, is marked by both concessions to imperialist pressure and growing fears of imminent attack. Cuban Deputy Prime Minister Oscar Pérez-Oliva Fraga recently declared that “there are no limitations” on investment from the Cuban diaspora, explicitly appealing to Cuban exile capitalists in Miami, many of whom have historically backed terrorist attacks and coup attempts against the island.

This appeal underscores the extent to which the Cuban government is seeking an accommodation with US

capital. Havana has repeatedly signaled its willingness to implement an unrestricted opening to foreign investment and allow US officials to directly oversee the process, effectively offering to oversee a US-dominated export-oriented economy.

The Castroite government also freed over 2,000 prisoners in the largest release in a decade and even invited the FBI to the island to investigate the incident in February where heavily armed Cuban-American terrorists on a US-flagged speedboat were killed by Cuban security forces.

The desperation of sections of the Cuban elite was revealed in an extraordinary episode following the April 10 meeting. Raúl Guillermo Rodríguez Castro reportedly attempted to bypass official channels by sending a private letter to the White House via a businessman courier, Roberto Carlos Chamizo González. The courier was intercepted in Miami and sent back to Cuba, as first reported by the *Wall Street Journal*.

The attempted backchannel communication reveals a frantic effort to avert an attack through concessions—efforts that history shows will only embolden imperialist aggression.

On April 17, the anniversary of the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel delivered a speech placing the country on maximum alert: “The moment is extremely challenging and calls upon us once again to be ready to face serious threats, including military aggression.”

Workers must carefully study the fate of Venezuela following military aggression. A January 3 military operation led to the kidnapping of President Nicolás Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores, who now face terrorism charges in a US court. In the aftermath, a puppet regime aligned with US interests was installed, handing over control of oil, minerals and the broader economy to American corporations and the US Treasury.

However bad the economic situation was in Venezuela, it has only grown worse for workers, who have protested against the government and US embassy demanding living wages. Cuba would meet a similar fate under a pro-US regime, which would seek to attract investments on the basis of maintaining desperate conditions to coerce workers to accept extremely low wages and sweatshop conditions.

Cuba is facing an acute fuel shortage after oil shipments from Venezuela, its primary supplier for decades, were halted in January following US actions against that country. Trump subsequently imposed a full oil blockade,

threatening punitive tariffs on any nation that supplies fuel to Cuba.

The consequences have been catastrophic. Blackouts lasting up to 20 hours have become routine, crippling infrastructure and daily life. Water systems, dependent on electric pumps, have failed in many urban areas. Garbage collection has collapsed, and hospitals are struggling to function as medical equipment fails and supplies dwindle.

A single Russian tanker carrying approximately 730,000 barrels of oil was allowed through the blockade in late March, providing only temporary relief. A second Russian tanker is en route to Cuba and could arrive, if allowed by the US Coast Guard, as early as April 29.

The United Nations has warned that the blockade could trigger a “severe humanitarian crisis,” affecting every aspect of the food system—from irrigation and harvesting to refrigeration and distribution.

Having already imposed devastating sanctions and blockades, Washington now insists that Cuba open itself fully to foreign capital—effectively demanding surrender in exchange for the possibility of relief.

The alternative posed by US imperialism is not democracy or prosperity, but the restoration of a neocolonial order reminiscent of the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista, under which Cuba functioned as a playground for foreign capital and organized crime.

The escalating threat of war against Cuba must be opposed by workers throughout the Americas and internationally. Workers in the United States, in particular, bear a decisive responsibility. Through their collective power over production and distribution, they have the capacity to break the embargo and halt the machinery of war. This requires an independent political mobilization, as part of a broader struggle against capitalism and for socialist internationalism.



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