

Threat of US military action against Cuba mounts with Iran ceasefire

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The ceasefire agreement signed Sunday between the United States and Iran does not secure any lasting peace in the Middle East or anywhere else. In fact, even if temporarily, it frees Washington's military resources for another front, and President Donald Trump has stated repeatedly that "Cuba will be next."

Last month, Trump said in a speech in Florida, "On the way back from Iran, we'll have one of our big ... aircraft carrier stop about 100 yards offshore" and wait for the Cuban government to give up.

Most recently, on Wednesday, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth made a provocative visit to Guantánamo Bay—the US naval base held indefinitely on Cuban territory—where he made entirely unfounded claims that Havana was looking "to procure or get access to the types of weapons that could reach this base or the American homeland."

Axios reported last month, citing classified intelligence documents, that Cuba had been acquiring hundreds of attack drones from Russia and Iran. Cuban authorities have denied all such claims.

Military experts note that the Cuban military is in a state of disrepair following years of sanctions and the fuel blockade, making the claims of a threat to the United States absurd on their face.

The Trump administration has also moved to construct a pseudo-legal pretext for military action. Last month it indicted 94-year-old former President Raúl Castro on four counts of murder in connection with the 1996 downing of two planes operated by Brothers to the Rescue, a CIA-linked exile organization that conducted repeated hostile overflights of Cuban territory. As the WSWS has explained, the indictment directly mirrors the strategy used against Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro: fabricate criminal charges, then use them as cover for abduction or military intervention.

The Pentagon has been preparing for military action. *Politico* reported in late May that it "has spent months positioning the troops and weapons needed for the U.S. to launch a military attack on Cuba—all it needs is a final go-ahead from Donald Trump." This includes the USS Nimitz aircraft carrier strike group, which is operating in the Caribbean near Cuba as a standing show of force.

A population under siege

These military threats are unfolding against the backdrop of a humanitarian catastrophe imposed deliberately by Washington. The energy blockade established in January—when Trump issued an executive decree threatening any oil suppliers with sanctions—remains in full force and is tightening. After the Florida-based company Vanguard Energy announced plans to ship approximately 250,000 barrels of fuel to Cuba, the State Department denied any authorization had been granted, and Miami-Dade County revoked the company's right to operate.

Daily blackouts now exceed 20 hours and affect over 60 percent of the island. There is no relief in sight.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, issued a stark warning this week: "The fuel restrictions imposed since early 2026 and recent tightening of extraterritorial sanctions, taken together, are directly harming Cubans, especially the most vulnerable. Children are dying because doctors lack access to essential medical supplies and medicines. This is unacceptable. These sanctions must be lifted immediately."

The data behind that warning is devastating. Infant mortality has doubled to 9.9 per 1,000 births since the fuel restrictions were imposed. Childhood cancer survival rates have fallen from 85 percent to 65 percent. Essential medicine supply levels have dropped to approximately 30 percent of normal. Fuel shortages have disrupted the agricultural supply chain, causing a reported 60 percent decrease in food production and sharp spikes in the cost of basic food items.

In early May, a US executive order vastly broadened restrictions on any businesses operating with Cuban entities. The foreign banking partner that had processed all Visa and Mastercard transactions for Cuba terminated its relationship with the Cuban financial firm Fincimex, citing the threat of US penalties. Air Canada suspended its flights to Cuba indefinitely, and Spanish hotel chains Meliá and Iberostar halted operations at a significant number of hotels ahead of a June 5 deadline set by the US government for companies to cease doing business with GAESA, the military-run conglomerate that controls a large share of the Cuban economy.

The UN Human Rights Chief summarized the trajectory: “Cuba faces increasing isolation. Companies are leaving. Fewer airlines fly to the country. It is almost disconnected from international payment systems. Rising summer temperatures risk increasing the spread of vector-borne and waterborne diseases. The hurricane season further increases exposure. This creates a perfect storm for social and economic deterioration and suffering for the Cuban people.”

The combined impact is also blocking humanitarian agencies, including UN bodies, from delivering relief: the suspension of services by major shipping companies recently affected more than 2,900 metric tons of humanitarian food cargo.

The Cuban government’s response to this siege has not been to appeal to the international working class against this naked imperialist aggression.

It has been to offer the Trump administration economic concessions, seeking to demonstrate that the Castroite leadership can oversee the island as a profitable source of cheap labor and natural resources for US corporations.

Last Friday, President Miguel Díaz-Canel announced a sweeping package of 20 liberalization measures spanning tourism, foreign trade, foreign investment and the private sector. He opened Cuba’s hotel sector to “new actors” and “new modalities” to fill the vacuum.

State import intermediaries, which had previously been required to participate in all foreign commerce, are to be eliminated in favor of a more “dynamic” trading environment. Agricultural producers are to be granted direct access to inputs, the right to hold accounts with real cash backing and access to foreign exchange markets. The government announced it will “incentivize” foreign direct investment and extend the same conditions to Cubans living abroad—including the exile community in Miami, long associated with coup and terrorist operations against Cuba—as to residents on the island.

More sectors of the economy are to be opened to non-state actors, and the number of ministries is to be reduced from 27 to 20. Díaz-Canel also returned to the long-standing government objective of “gradually eliminating subsidies to products.” While claiming this is to direct social support to “vulnerable groups.” This austerity measure will allow for open-ended inflation and even deeper economic desperation.

These changes are, in substance, a program of shock therapy and structural adjustment—the same type of measures being implemented by Trump-aligned far-right governments across the region, including Argentina’s Javier Milei and Rodrigo Paz’s government in Bolivia.

Despite these massive concessions, the Trump administration has stated openly that its objective is directly what has been imposed on Venezuela, where income from oil sales and government finances are being managed directly by the US Treasury Department, where US troops operate freely, and where a puppet regime was installed through military force.

Economic concessions by Havana will only embolden Trump

to establish a semi-colonial protectorate.

The current prostration of the Castroite leadership—its receiving the CIA director in Havana, its appeals to Miami *gusano* capitalists, its dismantling of social rights and nationalizations—is not an accident. It is the logical conclusion of a nationalist and capitalist program that was always hostile to the independent power of the working class and was therefore always incapable of sustaining the gains of the 1959 revolution against the pressure of imperialism.

As a recent WSWS statement on the balance sheet of Castroism stated, pointing to Leon Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution:

The Cuban revolution provides a strategic confirmation of the theory of permanent revolution in the negative. Even the most radical nationalizations carried out by a petty-bourgeois nationalist government, under conditions of mass mobilization, could not resolve the democratic task of emancipation from imperialism. Defenders of Castroism could argue that it is precisely the isolation imposed by US imperialism that led to their failure, but that argument only underscores the point that the struggle for workers’ power as an integral component of world socialist revolution is necessary.

The defense of Cuba against military attack and the genocidal blockade requires the mobilization of the working class internationally—above all in the United States. Its defense cannot be built on illusions in the Cuban government’s ability to negotiate its way out of Washington’s crosshairs, or in the regional bourgeois governments that have fallen silent as the blockade tightens and the carrier strike group takes up position in the Caribbean. It can only be built on the program of socialist internationalism that unites workers across the Americas in a common struggle to put an end to imperialist militarism and the capitalist system that is its source.



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