

War on Venezuela looms as opposition mounts

written by Gary Wilson
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Chicago, Nov. 11: Military veterans protest U.S. bombing of fishing boats off Venezuela. Photo: The Final Call

Nov. 22 — The Trump administration is preparing to launch a new phase of operations against Venezuela within days, according to four U.S. officials who spoke to Reuters on Nov. 22. The escalation comes despite polling showing overwhelming public opposition to military intervention and growing international condemnation of U.S. actions in the region.

Reuters reports that covert operations are expected to be the first component of the new phase, with options under consideration including attempts to overthrow the government of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

The escalation builds on months of military buildup in the Caribbean. The Navy's largest aircraft carrier, the USS Gerald R. Ford, arrived in the region on Nov. 16 with its strike group, joining at least seven other warships, a nuclear submarine, and F-35 aircraft. Since September, U.S. forces have carried out at least 21 strikes on alleged drug boats, killing at least 83 people, mostly in the Caribbean.

Covert authorization and “preparing the battlefield”

The New York Times reported in October that Trump signed a classified “presidential finding” authorizing the CIA to conduct covert operations in Venezuela. According to the Times, these operations could include sabotage, cyberattacks, psychological operations, or other actions intended to “prepare the battlefield” for further military action.

On Monday, the administration plans to designate the so-called Cartel de los Soles as a foreign terrorist organization. Trump has claimed this designation will allow the U.S. to strike Venezuelan assets and infrastructure.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth stated last week that the terrorist designation “brings a whole bunch of new options to the United States.” The administration has doubled the reward for information leading to Maduro's arrest to \$50 million.

Venezuela is not involved in any way with the global drug trade. Pino Arlacchi, former head of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), says that decades of annual reports on drug trafficking never once mention Venezuela, because it doesn't exist.

Arlacchi calls the Cartel of the Suns an entity as mythical as the Loch Ness Monster. He says that the Cartel de los Soles does not actually exist — that it is a U.S. intelligence invention used to criminalize Venezuelan officials wholesale and manufacture a pretext for intervention. It's reported that the name is a CIA invention. The suns are a reference to the insignia worn by Venezuelan military personnel on their uniforms.

Pino Arlacchi continues: "Yet Venezuela is systematically demonized, contrary to every principle of truth. In his memoir following his resignation, former FBI Director James Comey revealed the unspoken motives behind American policies towards Venezuela. Trump told him that Maduro's government was 'sitting on a mountain of oil that we have to buy.' This is not about drugs, crime or national security. It is about oil that the U.S. would rather not pay for."

Public rejects regime change narrative

Despite the administration's justifications, the U.S. public remains opposed. Opposition to using military force outweighs support by a significant margin: 45% oppose overthrowing Maduro while only 17% favor doing so. A separate Reuters / Ipsos poll found that 51% of respondents disapproved of the boat strikes that have killed dozens of people, nearly double the 29% who approved.

Legal concerns and international pushback

The strikes on boats are illegal killings of civilians. The top military lawyer for U.S. Southern Command, which oversees operations in the Caribbean, raised concerns in

August that the strikes could amount to extrajudicial killings and could legally expose service members involved in the operations. His concerns were overruled.

The commander of Southern Command, Admiral Alvin Holsey, resigned in October, reportedly due to concerns about the legality of the boat strikes.

Several U.S. allies have refused to share intelligence for the Caribbean operations due to concerns over their legality. Britain, France, Canada, and the Netherlands have all declined to provide intelligence support. Former U.S. Ambassador Chas Freeman called Britain's decision "quite remarkable," noting it represents "a break with the 80-year long US-UK intelligence cooperation alliance."

MI6 and the British establishment have stated that the attacks are illegal and would subject those who carry them out to prosecution, describing them as war crimes and acts of piracy.

Venezuela prepares defense

The Venezuelan government has responded to U.S. threats by mobilizing military exercises and preparing for what it calls "prolonged resistance" in the event of invasion. This approach would involve small military units at more than 280 locations carrying out sabotage and guerrilla tactics.

President Maduro has stated that Venezuelan citizens and the military will resist any U.S. attempt to oust him, and has characterized U.S. actions as an effort to seize control of Venezuela's oil and other significant resources, including gold, coltan (used in electronics), and other minerals. Venezuela has the largest proven oil reserves in the world.

Maduro has also expressed willingness to resolve differences through diplomacy and hold face-to-face talks.

The demand: Stop the war on Venezuela

The Trump administration's escalating aggression against Venezuela represents a dangerous continuation of U.S. imperialist policy in Latin America. The operation is being conducted without public support, without legal justification, and without regard for international law or human rights.

The rationale for war has been exposed as fraudulent. The military buildup far exceeds anything needed for counter-narcotics operations. The boat strikes have killed dozens of people in what amounts to illegal executions. And now the administration is preparing to launch covert operations and potentially a full military intervention against a sovereign nation that poses no threat to the United States.

What is clear is that this has nothing to do with drugs and everything to do with regime change and control of Venezuela's oil and resources. This is how the U.S. empire operates: It does not believe in self-determination and thinks it has the right to intervene in the domestic politics of every country on the planet.

With a new phase of operations set to begin within days, the demand must be clear and unequivocal: Stop the U.S. war on Venezuela. No covert operations. No military strikes. No regime change. Hands off Venezuela.

