

Cuba sounds the alarm: Defense Council meets (presumably) due to Venezuela crisis



Meeting of the National Defense Council in Havana on October 16 (Source: Presidencia)

Cuba's leadership convened the [National Defense Council](#) on Wednesday. But instead of the usual topic for this time of year, it was not about a hurricane. At least not one that is brewing as a meteorological phenomenon. Virtually nothing has been revealed about the content of the meeting, which was chaired by Raúl Castro. However, recent events suggest that it was about the escalating situation in Venezuela.

Defense Council meets behind closed doors

In addition to Castro, President Miguel Díaz-Canel, members of the Defense Council, and high-ranking officers from the armed forces and the Ministry of the Interior participated. However, no information was provided about specific decisions or plans. The brief statement that “decisions and plans of the working and security bodies” were approved suggests crisis measures whose details are not being made public for security reasons. It is noteworthy that, contrary to the provisions of the constitution, the meeting was chaired by 94-year-old Castro as “leader at the head of the revolution” and not by the president as formal commander-in-chief.

Cuba has maintained a close political, economic, and military alliance with Venezuela for years, initiated by former Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez and Fidel Castro in the early 2000s. The country is one of Cuba's most important trading partners, even though oil supplies have declined in recent years. In September, however, Venezuela [increased](#) its supply volume again to 52,000 barrels per day.

Havana has been warning for several weeks about an imminent US military action against Venezuela. On October 9, the Cuban Foreign Ministry [stated](#) that the “threats to peace, security, and stability” in Latin America were “real and immediate.” This comes against the

backdrop of [recent reports](#) about the approval of CIA operations against Venezuela and Trump's threats of land attacks.

US Navy off the coast of Venezuela

US President Donald Trump confirmed on Wednesday that he had authorized the CIA to conduct covert operations in Venezuela. "We are certainly looking at the mainland now, because we have the sea under control very well," Trump told reporters.

The comments confirmed [reports](#) in the *New York Times* about a secret presidential directive for CIA operations in the Caribbean. Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro reacted sharply, speaking of "CIA coups." He ordered military exercises in the country's largest slums and mobilized the military, police, and civilian militia.

For several weeks now, US warships, including an aircraft carrier, a nuclear submarine, and several landing ships, have been cruising off the country's coast. Officially, the mission is to fight drug cartels. Several alleged smuggling boats have been destroyed in recent weeks.

The Cuban Foreign Ministry described the US actions as "illegal" and warned that "after the destruction of these boats, the threat of the use of force against Venezuela is increasing with the announcement of a new phase of escalation that would include military action against land targets."

Cuba accuses US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and "anti-Cuban congressmen from Florida" of promoting war in the region. These politicians are "irresponsibly threatening to unleash American military power against a sovereign nation as if it were a police raid in a neighborhood."

The battle for oil as a motive?

Havana sees the US maneuvers as an attempt to "seize the oil and natural resources of the South American country." With an estimated 47 billion tons, Venezuela has the world's largest oil reserves, ahead of Saudi Arabia.

[According to the New York Times](#), Venezuela's controversial left-wing president Maduro (who has been accused of election fraud, among other things) offered the US access to a significant portion of Venezuela's oil wealth in exchange for peace at the beginning of the year. The offer was apparently rejected by Washington.

Venezuelan Foreign Minister Yván Gil thanked Cuba for the appeal and warned that the movement of US forces "continues to intensify and poses a serious risk to the entire region." The international community must "mobilize to stop an act of war against Venezuela," demanded the Cuban Foreign Ministry. ([Cubaheute](#))