

Trump Declares He Might 'Stop By' Cuba; U.S. 'Preparing for Military Campaign'

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Exactly 65 years after the failure of the CIA-backed Bay of Pigs invasion, U.S. President Donald Trump has once again raised the possibility of military intervention in Cuba.

President Donald Trump stated that after handling the Iran issue, the U.S. might "stop by" Cuba, amid reports that the U.S. military is rushing to prepare plans for a potential military deployment to the island.

"Cuba is a failed nation and we're going to do this, and we'll probably stop by Cuba after we're finished with this [the war in Iran]," Trump told reporters at the White House on April 13.

Assessing the possibility of U.S. military intervention in Cuba, **Professor Robin Lauren Derby** from the Department of History at UCLA and Chair of the Bradford Burns Latin American History, told BBC News Vietnamese in late March:

"Cautiously, one could say that given the examples of Iran and Venezuela—where we see political continuity—Trump understands clearly that he cannot simply send troops directly into Cuba."

She suggested that, for now, Trump's goals are quite limited, such as opening up the economy—something Cubans also desire, as the economy has been in turmoil for a long time due to the U.S. embargo and the loss of oil from Venezuela.

'Military Planning'

On April 15, *USA Today* cited two sources familiar with the matter, stating that the U.S. military is quietly and urgently planning for a military campaign that could be deployed in Cuba.

These contingency plans are being prepared in anticipation of President Trump ordering an intervention, the sources revealed under the condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak publicly.

Earlier in the week, sources also told the news outlet *Zeteo* that the Pentagon received direct instructions from the White House to prepare for a potential military operation in the Caribbean region.

These reports have garnered significant attention, as President Trump has mentioned more than once the possibility of Cuba collapsing and the U.S. "taking" the island.

On April 13, the White House incumbent said the U.S. would likely "stop by Cuba" after finishing business in Iran. He added: "Cuba is a country that has been run horribly for many years."

"There are many wonderful Cuban-Americans here, almost all of whom voted for me, and they have been treated poorly. In many cases, their family members were killed. They were beaten, robbed, and terrible things happened in Cuba."

This is not the first time Trump has spoken bluntly about U.S. intervention. Following the campaign to arrest Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro in January, Trump said that Cuba would soon collapse on its own. The implication was that without Venezuelan oil, the Cuban economy could not survive, and economic collapse would lead to regime collapse.

This was followed by an aggressive U.S. blockade of oil supplies, intercepting tankers en route to Cuba, pushing the Caribbean island into a state of fuel exhaustion and nationwide power outages.

By March 16, from the Oval Office, Trump stated bluntly: "You know, all my life, I've heard about the U.S. and Cuba—when will the U.S. have the honor of taking Cuba? It's a great honor."

"Taking Cuba in a way, yes, taking Cuba—I mean, whether I liberate it or take it, I think I can do whatever I want with that country."

In response, Cuban leaders have reacted strongly. In a recent interview with *Newsweek*, Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel declared that his country would fight if the U.S. attacked. "We will fight, we will defend ourselves, and if we die in battle, it is so the motherland may live," he said.

More Than a Century of Friction

While the media often focuses on the period since Fidel Castro took power in 1959, the conflict has a history spanning over a century.

Professor Robin Lauren Derby noted: "Like Vietnam, Cuba has a long history of struggling for sovereignty, first against Spain and then against the U.S. When Cubans retell their revolutionary history, they often start in 1898—the moment U.S. soldiers snatched the fruits of independence from Cuban forces who had been fighting for it for 30 years prior."

Following the Spanish-American War, the U.S. imposed the Platt Amendment, allowing the military to intervene whenever U.S. interests were threatened. "This intervention happened dozens of times during Cuba's early republican period," Professor Derby said.

Is U.S. Intervention Likely?

What motivates Trump to intervene in Cuba? In Venezuela and Iran, the conversation often revolves around oil. What does a small, impoverished Cuba offer?

Expert Sebastian A. Arcos suggested that while Trump favors transactional arrangements, the "Venezuela model" might not apply if the goal is total regime change.

Professor Derby observed: "Trump is indeed a transactional person, and perhaps he sees real estate opportunities for his family in Cuba, considering the draw of the Cuban tourism industry throughout the 20th century." However, she noted that Cuba currently has little to offer in return, other than "soft power" like medical assistance—a field Trump has shown little interest in.

Researchers believe that Trump's statements and the military planning may be intended more as a deterrent signal than an immediate deployment strategy. Experts suggest that while the U.S. could achieve a quick military victory over Cuba's aging forces, the true challenge would be the political aftermath: establishing order and a new government.

A military victory might be easy, but a political victory is far more difficult.