



Written by [Paul Dragu](#) on January 31, 2026

Trump Declares Cuba a National Security Threat

President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Thursday declaring Cuba a national security threat. The order imposes a tariff system that allows the United States to level duties on imports from other countries that provide oil to Cuba.

Thanks to the U.S. military [operation in Venezuela](#), Cuba was already experiencing a major oil shortage. For years, Venezuela has served as its main oil provider. With this latest choke move, the Trump administration is likely trying to topple the communist regime in Cuba. “Cuba will not be able to survive,” Trump told reporters Thursday night.



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These new tariffs will impact Mexico most, which is Cuba’s main oil provider now that America has control over Venezuela. Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said on Friday that the tariffs could “trigger a far-reaching humanitarian crisis” in Cuba that could affect its hospitals, food supply, and other services. But she did not clarify whether Mexico would stop exporting oil to Cuba.

A looming question is whether the Trump administration will order a Venezuela-style operation in Cuba if the current government doesn’t fall. The new threat designation would make it easier to justify a potential military operation against Havana. During his press conference after the operation in Venezuela, reporters asked Trump if he would carry out similar action in Cuba. He didn’t rule it out.

Trump’s Justification for Declaration

As for the executive order, in it the president [writes](#), “I find that the policies, practices, and actions of the Government of Cuba constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat, which has its source in whole or substantial part outside the United States, to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.”

The order points out Cuba’s ties to Russia, China, and Iran. “The regime aligns itself with — and provides support for — numerous hostile countries, transnational terrorist groups, and malign actors adverse to the United States,” it says, noting that

Cuba blatantly hosts dangerous adversaries of the United States, inviting them to base sophisticated military and intelligence capabilities in Cuba that directly threaten the national security of the United States. Cuba hosts Russia’s largest overseas signals intelligence facility, which tries to steal sensitive national security information of the United States. Cuba continues to build deep intelligence and defense cooperation with the PRC. Cuba welcomes transnational terrorist groups, such as Hezbollah and Hamas, creating a safe environment for these malign groups so that these transnational terrorist groups can build economic, cultural, and security ties throughout the region and attempt to destabilize



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the Western Hemisphere, including the United States.

The order also mentions what the Cuban government has been doing to its citizens for a long time:

The communist regime persecutes and tortures its political opponents; denies the Cuban people free speech and press; corruptly profits from their misery; and commits other human-rights violations. For example, families of political prisoners face retaliation for peacefully protesting the improper confinement of their loved ones. Cuban authorities harass worshippers, block free association by civil society organizations, prohibit free press, and deny the ability to speak freely, including on the internet.

This latest move aligns with the Trump administration's aggressive Monroe Doctrine-esque agenda in the Western Hemisphere. The administration has made clear not only in action but in its official documents, both the [National Defense Strategy](#) and [National Security Strategy](#), that America will not take kindly to hostile regimes in its neighborhood.



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