



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on February 25, 2019

Maduro Closes the Door to Aid; His Military Kill Eight, Wound Hundreds

The New American magazine said on Friday that Venezuela's Marxist dictator Nicolás Maduro had two options and only two to resolve the crisis on his borders with Colombia and Brazil: let the 600 tons of aid provided by the United States, NGOs, and other countries (foodstuffs, medicines, and personal hygiene items) into his country and appear the humanitarian; or order his military to block entry of the aid, with force if necessary, and confirm that he's a communist thug seeking only his own survival.



On Saturday [Maduro chose Door No. 2](#). He said “My patience has run out” and ordered his military to keep the opposition from delivering the aid through any of the three main portals where the 600 tons of aid has been collected over the last several months. He told supporters gathered in Caracas on Sunday that “It’s time for our people to tell Donald Trump, ‘Donald Trump, Yankee, go home, Donald Trump!’”

At latest count, eight Venezuelans have been killed and hundreds more wounded. Upwards of a hundred have been arrested and jailed.

Maduro also ended relations with Colombia, giving its representatives in Venezuela 24 hours to leave.

Despite the crackdown, at least two trailers of food and supplies have entered the country from Brazil through its porous southern border and more than 60 of Maduro's military forces have deserted their posts, seeking asylum in Colombia.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo made it clear on Sunday that pressure on Maduro will be ramped up further in light of the dictator's intransigence and defiance. On *Fox News Sunday* Pompeo stated, “We're very hopeful that in the days and weeks and months ahead the Maduro regime will understand that the Venezuelan people have made its days numbered,” adding that “no options” are off the table: “We're going to do the things that need to be done to make sure that the Venezuelan people's voice [is heard], that democracy reigns and that there's a brighter future for the people of Venezuela.”

This squares with the statement issued by his department on Saturday:

The United States will take action against and hold accountable those who oppose the peaceful restoration of democracy in Venezuela.

In another interview on Sunday, this one on CNN's *State of the Union*, Pompeo told Jake Tapper, “I think we'll find other ways to make sure that the food gets to the people who need it, and we will.”

When Tapper asked about the role Venezuela's vast oil reserves was playing in the American response to Maduro's resistance, Pompeo reiterated the administration's position that it was all about removing Maduro, adding that Cuban and Russian support for his regime would also have to go:



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We're aimed at a singular mission — ensuring that the Venezuelan people get the democracy that they so richly deserve and that the Cubans and the Russians who have been driving this country into the ground for years and years and years no longer hold sway....

I'm confident that the Venezuelan people will ensure that Maduro's days are numbered.

The Saturday deadline for delivery of that aid announced by Maduro's opponent, interim president Juan Guaidó, came and went as the clashes weakened on Sunday. But the issue is far from settled. Guaidó is meeting with Vice President Mike Pence today in Bogota to plan the next step. It's likely to be enlisting the assistance of some of Maduro's neighbors who have decried his oppressive regime and are supporting the United States in its efforts to oust the communist dictator.

The initial skirmish was a standoff. The war is far from over.

Photo: AP Images

An Ivy League graduate and former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American blog primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at badelman@thenewamerican.com.

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