

Hegseth Tells Troops to Prepare for 'Any Possible Contingency' With Cuba

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth visited the U.S. Naval Station at Guantanamo Bay on Wednesday and delivered a pointed message to troops: the Pentagon is ready for armed conflict with Cuba.

He framed the standoff as a decision that rests with two parties. The future of Cuba, he said, is “in the hands of the President of the United States and the leadership of Cuba.”

“No matter what, the Department of War is going to be prepared and postured for any possible contingency,” Hegseth said during the visit, using his preferred name for the Defense Department.

Hegseth is the third senior Trump administration official to travel to the Guantanamo Bay installation in recent weeks. Gen. Francis Donovan, commander of U.S. Southern Command, stopped there in late May for talks with Cuban military officials, including First Deputy Minister of the Chief of the General Staff Roberto Legrá Sotolongo. CIA Director John Ratcliffe visited earlier last month.



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The Trump administration has effectively imposed a fuel blockade on Cuba, cutting off a critical supply line for the island's communist government. Trump has publicly raised the possibility of a military invasion, and on May 20 told reporters Cuba is “on our mind.”

In a pointed escalation last month, the Justice Department indicted former Cuban President Raúl Castro on murder charges,

timing the announcement to coincide with Cuba's independence day. Castro has not been arrested.

The USS Nimitz carrier strike group remains deployed in the Caribbean Sea.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio, a Cuban American who has long advocated for regime change in Havana, acknowledged last month that the "likelihood" of a negotiated settlement with Cuba is "not high." Rubio has repeatedly condemned the island's government in public statements.

Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez offered a blunt response to the escalating pressure: any U.S. military action against his country would result in a "bloodbath."

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