

Bolton brands Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua a 'troika of tyranny' in sanctions rollout

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[Video](#)

White House targets Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua

National Security Adviser John Bolton brands the countries a 'troika of tyranny' while announcing new sanctions over human rights violations and political oppression.

National Security Adviser John Bolton on Thursday branded Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua a “troika of tyranny” and announced new measures against the socialist countries -- promising they “will feel the full weight of America’s robust sanctions regime.”

Bolton told the audience at Miami Dade College that under President Trump, “we will no longer appease dictators and despots near our shores in this Hemisphere.”

“The troika of tyranny, this triangle of terror stretching from Havana to Caracas to Managua, is the cause of immense human suffering, the impetus of enormous regional instability, and the genesis of a sordid cradle of communism in the Western Hemisphere,” he said.

The turn of phrase was reminiscent of the term “axis of evil,” used by President George W. Bush to describe North Korea, Iran and Iraq. Bolton served under Bush as U.N. ambassador.

During the address, he announced new sanctions against Venezuela and Cuba, and said that sanctions against Nicaragua were coming “in the very near future.” The administration will prohibit Americans from involvement in Venezuela’s gold export trade, while the State Department will be adding more than two-dozen entities owned or controlled by the Cuban military and intelligence services to a list of entities with which Americans are banned from making financial transactions.

Bolton used the remarks to distance the Trump administration from the policies of the Obama administration, under which former President Barack Obama re-opened diplomatic relations with Cuba. Bolton promised that “members of this administration will never take a picture in front of Che Guevara, plastered over the Cuban ministry that runs the National Revolutionary Police.”

“Our concern is with sanctions, not selfies,” he quipped.



[Video](#)

But he saved his ire for the leaders of the three socialist countries, and predicted that the "troika" would “meet its demise.”

“These tyrants fancy themselves strongmen and revolutionaries, icons and luminaries. In reality, they are clownish pitiful figures more akin to Larry, Curly and Moe,” he said. “The three stooges of socialism are true believers, but they worship a false God.”

He also dismissed the idea that the oppressive governments were deviating from socialist principles.

“On the contrary, the Cuban, Venezuelan and Nicaraguan people suffer in misery because socialism has been implemented effectively,” he said.

He hailed the elections of “like-minded leaders” in Colombia and Brazil -- where right-wing candidate Jair Bolsonaro won the presidency in Brazil last week, as “positive signs for the future of the region” and signs of a growing regional commitment to free-market principles and open government.

HALEY FIRES BACK AS UN CONDEMNS CUBA EMBARGO: 'WE WON'T BACK DOWN'

Bolton’s remarks coincided with a vote at the United Nations, where the body’s General Assembly voted to condemn the U.S. embargo against Cuba.

“Our reason for the embargo is and has always been Cuba’s denial of freedom and the denial of the most basic of human rights for the Cuban people,” U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley said. “The United States will continue to stand with the Cuban people until their rights and their freedoms are restored. Period. We won’t back down.”

The Associated Press contributed to this report.