

Pompeo slams Cuba and Russia over Venezuela crisis

By Jennifer Hansler, CNN

CNN Politics, March 11, 2019

(CNN) — Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Monday took aim at the Maduro regime, Cuba and Russia over the deepening crisis in Venezuela.

"Nicolas Maduro promised Venezuelans a better life in a socialist paradise. And he delivered on the socialism part, which has proved time and time again is a recipe for economic ruin," he said from the State Department briefing room.

"The paradise part? Not so much," Pompeo remarked.

Describing power outages, food shortages, medical shortages, inflation and poverty, Pompeo declared: "The United States did not do that."



[Venezuelan blackout victims 'murdered' by government, opposition leader says](#)

The US' top diplomat directed particular scorn towards Cuba, which he and other Trump administration officials have repeatedly denounced for its support of the Maduro regime.

"Cuba is the true imperialist power in Venezuela," he said.

"No nation has done more to sustain the death and daily misery of ordinary Venezuelans, including Venezuela's military and their families, than the communists in Havana," Pompeo said.

Pompeo criticized Russia, specifically citing its veto of a United Nations Security Council Resolution on Venezuela and its economic and arms support for the Maduro regime.

"PDVSA is today now a personal ATM for the Maduro regime and for Russian oligarchs and kleptocrats," Pompeo remarked referring to the Venezuelan state-owned oil company.

Earlier on Monday, the US Treasury Department announced sanctions against a bank that is jointly owned by Russian and Venezuelan state companies. The Moscow-based bank Evrofinance Mosnarbank has ties to PDVSA, Treasury said.

The Secretary of State also took aim at socialism and communism as institutions, saying they laid waste to the Cuban and Venezuelan economies.

While Pompeo acknowledged that there are "a handful of countries that are providing aid and comfort to the Maduro regime," he refused to call out any of the other nations by name.

"I assure you that those countries will know," Pompeo said, but said he was concerned they would liquidate their Maduro assets to Russia if publicly named.

Pompeo's remarks come as the embattled Venezuelan leader has refused to relinquish power, despite opposition leader Juan Guaido's declaring himself interim president almost two months ago. Pompeo, citing European and Central and South American support for Guaido, expressed optimism "that the tide is moving in the direction of the Venezuelan people," but conceded that they wish things would move faster.

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