

# *Venezuelan foreign minister says no act of imperialism will deter cooperation between free countries*

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Caracas, April 8 (RHC)-- Venezuelan Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza has condemned new sanctions imposed on his country by the United States, pointing out that "while the U.S. government boasts of defending economic and commercial principles, it announces sanctions against Venezuelan vessels and transportation in order to affect the delivery of oil to its sister Republic of Cuba."

The sanctions, according to Washington, will be placed on 34 ships operated by Venezuela's state-run oil company, Petroleos de Venezuela, S.A. Two international companies that conduct shipment transport between the two countries will also have sanctions levied on them. The U.S. government has, in the past, implied that Cuba is too closely allied with the Nicolas Maduro-led government.

The United States has expressed the need to "recalibrate" Venezuela-Cuba relations. The new sanctions aim to punish the Caribbean country for longstanding support of the Bolivarian government.

The top Venezuelan diplomat said: "The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela categorically rejects the new attack by the Government of the United States of America against the Venezuelan oil industry and its economic sovereignty."

The oil-targeting embargo will jeopardize partnerships for Venezuela and Cuba, as the U.S. aims to deter other countries from effecting collaborations by threatening sanctions. "It makes Cuba and Venezuela even more radioactive," Russ Dallen, a specialist in the Venezuelan oil industry, stated.

Arreaza calls the sanctions a violation of the country's "most basic economic and commercial rights, and questions how "a member-country of the World Trade Organization" and so-called "defender of liberal principles" would impose such measures. "[The sanctions] aim to do harm, not only to the countries of Venezuela and Cuba, but also the businesses and commercial associations that should instead benefit from international protection," Arreaza added.

Arreaza also noted that, regardless of the continued efforts by Washington to disable Venezuela's economy, "no act of imperialism will stop the cooperation between free and independent countries."

The foreign minister concluded his statement by warning the United States of Venezuela's plan to respond to the sanctions "through the corresponding legal channels."

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