

Venezuela seizes large shipment of U.S. weapons coming from Florida



Caracas, February 8 (RHC)-- Venezuela says it has seized a large shipment of U.S.-made weapons aboard a cargo plane that had taken off from Miami, Florida, days after U.S. President Donald Trump repeated threats of taking military action against the Latin American country.

Representatives from the Venezuelan National Guard and the National Integrated Service of Customs and Tax Administration (SENIAT) found the weapons aboard a plane that landed at the Arturo Michelena International Airport in the city of Valencia earlier this week.

The official Twitter account of the Venezuela Public Safety Bureau posted pictures of the confiscated weapons, which included 19 rifles, 118 ammunition clips, high-caliber ammo and 90 communication devices. Venezuelan authorities have launched an investigation to identify the source of the weapons, which arrived on a flight from Miami.

On January 23rd, opposition leader and president of the now defunct National Assembly Juan Guaidó swore himself in as "interim president" and called on President Nicolás Maduro to resign. The Trump administration rushed to support the self-proclaimed Venezuelan "president," warning Maduro that it

would consider all options, including military action, to remove him from power should he refuse to step down peacefully.

Maduro has accused the U.S. of orchestrating a “coup” against his government. He has also made it clear that he is open to dialogue with Guaido.

Trump said in an interview with CBS on Sunday that military action against Caracas remained "an option."

Earlier, Vice President Mike Pence doubled down on Washington’s support for Guaido, saying the Trump administration will forgo "dialogue" and consider "all options" to help him against Maduro.

Washington has been leading an international campaign of economic and diplomatic pressure against Maduro, including imposing sanctions on Venezuela's state-owned oil company. Besides the U.S., other major Western powers such as the UK, France, Spain and Germany have recognized Guaido as president.

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