

Russia warns Venezuela's Juan Guaido against inviting U.S. invasion



Moscow, February 21 (RHC)-- Russia has warned Venezuela's opposition leader Juan Guaido against "inviting foreign intervention" under the cover of aid shipments, reiterating Moscow's call for dialogue between the Caracas government and the opposition.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Wednesday expressed Russia's concern about "threats from the U.S. that are actively supported... by Venezuela's opposition, essentially inviting foreign intervention." He added that "whether direct or under cover of humanitarian aid," such an intervention is "unlikely to bring the result (Guaido) seeks."

Venezuelan Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino said on Tuesday that the military was on alert on the country's frontiers after Guaido vowed to bring the alleged aid in from various points on Saturday "one way or another."

On Thursday, Venezuela announced that its border with Brazil would be closed indefinitely to prevent any incursions.

Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro Maduro has denounced the aid, saying U.S. President Donald Trump is using Venezuela's humanitarian crisis as a cover-up for his military plans in the country. The defense minister says the army will remain alert to prevent any territorial violations.

Padrino's remarks came after Trump warned that members of the country's military would be risking their future and their lives by remaining loyal to Maduro and refusing to allow in the so-called humanitarian aid blocked at the Colombian border.

Lavrov denounced the U.S. threats as "unquestionably a violation of the UN charter and direct meddling in domestic affairs of an independent country." Russia's top diplomat also reiterated his country's call for dialogue in Venezuela, and expressed hope that Guaido "would respond to initiatives that suggest inclusive dialogue between all of Venezuela's political forces."

"Results can only come from inclusive political dialogue," he said.

The Latin American country has been in political turmoil since last month, when Guaido, a lawmaker who leads the defunct National Assembly, disputed last year's reelection of Maduro and proclaimed himself the "interim president" of the country.

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