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**Cuban Ambassador to Russia Denies Presence of Cuban Soldiers in Venezuela**

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Cuba stands in solidarity with Venezuela but has never deployed its soldiers in the Bolivarian Republic, Cuban Ambassador to Russia Gerardo Penalver Portal told Sputnik, commenting on the issue of providing military assistance to Caracas in case of possible US aggression.

"We have more than 20,000 doctors in Venezuela because we provide medical support, we have teachers, sports coaches in Venezuela, but we do not have soldiers... Cuba has never had soldiers in Venezuela... We will always stand in solidarity with Venezuela, this is in our principles, we will not accept any threats. We are not afraid, we do not believe in the use of force, we believe in dialogue and negotiations", the ambassador said.

Amid the recent attempt of Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido to depose President Nicolas Maduro in late April, US National Security Adviser John Bolton reiterated that "all options are on the table" with regard to Venezuela, adding, however, that Washington hoped to see a peaceful transfer of power.

Venezuela has experienced a worsening political crisis since January when Guaido proclaimed himself to be interim president. The United States and their

allies recognised Guaido, but Russia, China, Turkey and numerous other countries have said they consider Maduro to be the only legitimate head of state in Venezuela.

Maduro has called Guaido a US puppet and accused the United States of orchestrating a coup in Venezuela to effect a forced change of government and claim its natural resources.

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