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Havana Dismisses US Claims About Cuba's Support for Venezuelan Secret Police

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Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez dismissed claims made by US Vice President Mike Pence that the Cuban military had allegedly trained and supported Venezuelan secret police in a bid to silence the country's opposition, calling these allegations "gross lies" and a propaganda campaign.

Pence made his claims in an opinion piece for the Miami Herald.

"I strongly reject repeated and false accusations by vice president Pence and other #US officials of Cuban military 'training,' 'controlling' or 'intimidating' in #Venezuela. These are gross lies, part of the vicious McCarthyist propaganda campaign launched by #US," Rodriguez wrote on Twitter on Friday.

The foreign minister added that Havana and Caracas enjoyed relations based on mutual respect and solidarity without interfering in each others' internal affairs.

Rodriguez also expressed his support for Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

Venezuela is currently embroiled in political turmoil.

In January, opposition leader Juan Guaido, backed by the United States, declared himself the interim president of Venezuela after disputing Maduro's re-election last May. Washington immediately endorsed Guaido, called on Maduro to step down and seized billions of dollars' worth of Venezuela's oil assets.

Maduro has accused the United States of trying to orchestrate a coup in order to install Guaido as a puppet leader beholden to Washington. US-backed forces attempted to overthrow Maduro's predecessor Hugo Chavez in a failed coup in 2002. Russia, China, Cuba, Bolivia, Turkey and a number of other countries have voiced their support for Maduro as the only legitimate president of Venezuela.

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