
Cuba president urges defense of Venezuela's Maduro

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Cuban President Raul Castro has urged allies to defend Venezuela against foreign conspiracies, amid months of anti-government protests in Venezuela.

Castro said in a speech at a Group 77 (G-77) plus China meeting in the Bolivian city of Santa Cruz that Venezuela deserves strong support from its allies.

"Imperialism and the oligarchs who were no match for President (Hugo) Chavez... they think that the time to destroy the Bolivarian revolution has come and overthrow President [Nicolas] Maduro's government using unconventional warfare methods, as they have done lately in different countries," said Castro.

Bolivian President Evo Morales also commented on the situation in Venezuela, saying that if the United States meddles militarily in the country, it would have a new Vietnam on its hands.

"If [US President] Mr. [Barack] Obama keeps assailing the people of Venezuela, I am convinced that, faced with provocation and aggression, Venezuela and Latin America will be a second Vietnam for the United States," said Morales.

"Let us defend democracy, natural resources, our sovereignty and our dignity," Morales added.

Last month, Caracas announced it would file a complaint against Washington at the United Nations (UN). Maduro accused the US of supporting the Venezuelan opposition in an attempt to topple his government.

Venezuela has been witnessing protests against and in support of the administration of President Maduro since February.

The opposition says it refuses to return to the negotiating table until the government accepts their demands, including amnesty for opposition prisoners. The government, on the other hand, accuses the opposition of making impossible requests that are akin to blackmail.

The protests have lost momentum since April 7, when the government and opposition leaders held talks for the first time to end tensions.

The opponents of the government have criticized the Maduro administration for the country's high crime rate and economic hardships, claiming that its policies have led to a shortage of essential goods and high inflation.
