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Corsairs in Search of Supertankers

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Much has been written since Thursday, December 11, when President Trump ordered the attack and subsequent theft of a supertanker, carrying approximately 1.9 million barrels of crude oil, off the Venezuelan coast in international waters.

Days later, on December 16, the president arrogantly decreed from the White House that Venezuelan oil belongs to him, arbitrarily imposing a new anti-Venezuelan sanction that includes the blocking of "sanctioned" tankers, whose obvious aim is to cripple the Venezuelan economy.

To justify these actions, which are frankly violations of international maritime law, the US government operates under a logic that can be colloquially described as "me myself."

In other words, the US government labels an entity an enemy using any of the current categories, such as narco-terrorist, then places it on a spurious list and, following this perverse "self-interest" logic, imposes a battery of sanctions.

Cuba is all too familiar with this absurdity, having been placed, if you will, on a list where it should never have been, as a country that, in essence, permits terrorism. It's widely known that the "designating" country, the US, has organized and financed countless terrorist acts against the Cuban population.

Thus, the sanctions against Venezuela target its main export, oil, except, of course, for the oil that PDVSA exports to the US by mutual agreement with Chevron, in a scandalous alignment with the "self-interest" logic. This means that Washington will only allow oil to leave Venezuela if it's destined for the US.

Trying to justify the predatory operation last Thursday, November 11, against the supertanker, Trump himself had no qualms about explaining that it was a sanctioned ship, that therefore they could seize it, and furthermore, that the oil, 1.9 million barrels, would be sent to a US port, because after all, he needs to lower gasoline prices in the country. Such audacity is unbelievable.

On this matter, another timely clarification: the US Navy has been accused of piracy, but that term is not the most appropriate; these men are really privateers, because they act with the letter of marque from the government that sent them.

Of course, for all practical purposes, they are the same scourge. Two centuries after British or French privateers decimated the Indies Fleet, or the Silver Fleet, as the ships that transported the riches extracted from the Americas to Cádiz were known, now the US Marines, acting on Trump's orders, steal oil shipped and purchased by third-party countries, with little regard for the consequences of this robbery. In other words, pirates act on their own, but privateers, acting on the orders of "King" Trump, are worse.

We still read that some people are concerned, surely sincerely, about the violations of the law implicit in these acts of the 2025 privateers; they fail to understand that these violations are the "natural" way the empire operates in its current phase, but that they implicitly conspire against the established order, which until now has been largely favorable to its interests.

This means that the rules-based world, the same one that was cruelly degraded by the genocide in Gaza, imposes a certain order on things, particularly regarding how fuel shipments should flow across the ocean. It's estimated that at least 3,800 ships simultaneously transport cargo that could be deadly if spilled at sea, to mention just one obvious example.

But unilateral sanctions against certain oil-exporting countries—none of them from the developed West—pose a significant blow to the eventual control of these shipments. And here's the million-dollar question: what can a country arbitrarily sanctioned under the "me myself" logic do when it needs to export fuel to sustain its economy?

So solutions emerge, which the developed West dismisses with terms like the Ghost Fleet, made up of ships flying false flags or other ploys to circumvent the aforementioned unilateral sanctions. The most absurd paradox is that some of the sanctioning entities receive fuel from those they sanction, using the services of these phantom fleets, or whatever you want to call them.

Then another question arises: wouldn't it be more logical to be transparent? For example, to avoid the risks of ships full of oil evasively roaming to avoid being confiscated.

Clearly, this logic, like many others, doesn't apply to the empire, convinced, in another deranged display, that force can achieve anything, probably because, in reality, it's all they have left.

Force, of course. It exists, it only serves to destroy, not even to intimidate anymore because disobedient attitudes among those sanctioned are proliferating; some even prosper under these conditions, as is the case with Russia, a leader in economic growth in the last year.

In the specific case of Venezuela, it must be reiterated that the aforementioned intimidation, seeking an internal rupture, has failed spectacularly. It's no longer even worth detailing how much the Pentagon, the Department of Defense, has been spending on Operation "Southern Spear" at the expense of the federal budget.

Therefore, the empire, internally divided between hawks and less hawkish forces in its original invasive project against Caracas, seems to be opting for a partial naval blockade, which could escalate as the entire Venezuelan government is now also considered a narco-terrorist entity, according to the ludicrous whim of President Trump, in a typical and arrogant "myself" style decision.

But one would have to be utterly foolish to believe that Venezuela won't find a way to evade the new attack; nor could one understand how the empire could possibly believe it can defeat the Bolivarian Revolution with such an elaborate blockade.

In this kind of uncontrolled madness, with planes flying around without warning, two aerial incidents occurred that narrowly avoided becoming genuine human tragedies, whose victims would likely have been American tourists.

A regular American flight, JetBlue 1112, was nearly rammed by an aircraft from the Southern Spear attack group, simply because the latter had its transponder turned off, given its mission to pointlessly threaten Venezuelans. It wasn't an error on behalf of the military pilot; it was the order he received, regardless of the damage caused. Days

later, the same thing happened to a civilian jet on a private flight.

From such a bizarre scenario, one could even offer a preliminary observation, which, as already stated, is that anything goes to keep the show going, to keep the MAGA supporters and other easily deceived fools believing in the vibrant leadership of President Trump, and that the US of the 1950s remains intact, in absurd defiance of the natural order.

Even delving into the details of many of the decisions the US is making against Venezuela reveals a narrative of a neighborhood bully, of showing who's in charge in Latin America and the Caribbean.

It's as if Venezuela is not only the object of desire, because it floats in a sea of oil and other resources, but also serves as a material case study, a model for illustrating the meaning of the Monroe Doctrine—I mean, the Trump Doctrine—in practical terms.

It's rightly emphasized that, ultimately, Trump is doing what has always happened in that country: creating some international crisis to cover up, in the media, the latest domestic disaster, some of which are like chronicles of a debacle foretold for the current president.

The year 2026 seems far more complex than the one that's ending. After the fleeting Christmas season, a new year begins with a Republican Party focused on maintaining its current congressional majority in the upcoming November elections, and if that weren't enough, the Trump administration is obligated to achieve some real progress for the people, not just the super-rich, beyond the colorful trinkets displayed before the TV cameras, occasionally set up in the Oval Office of the White House. We'll See.

**Translated by Amilkal Labañino / CubaSí Translation Staff**

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