

Maduro and Rouhani challenge Trump in Venezuela

Antonio De La Cruz

Executive Director

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Nicolás Maduro, Cartel de los Soles' leader according to the United States Attorney's Office, turns to Ayatollah Hassan Rouhani, president of the Islamic Republic of Iran solves the severe gasoline crisis that the Bolivarian country is going through.

Since Rosneft left the country due to sanctions imposed by the Trump government in February and March this year on the two subsidiary companies that sold Venezuelan oil, the import of fuel has fallen to the ground. The Russian company, which came to handle 70% of the crude oil exports of the state oil company PDVSA, supplied refined products through a barter mechanism to the Criminal Company that emerged during Hugo Chávez's criminal regime was strengthened by the Maduro's failed-mafia state.

The gasoline shortage in Venezuela was caused by the years of "the Red, Red Pdvsa" looting of its oil industry. The lack of maintenance and investment led the Amuay, Cardón, Bajo Grande, El Palito, Puerto La Cruz, and San Roque refineries to a standstill, to the point, that today they do not produce gasoline. Then, the internal demand for fuel was reached with the import, despite attempts to revamp, first, the El Palito refinery and, now, Cardón. The latter, the Criminal Enterprise, intends to achieve with the help of the Ayatollah regime. The airlift from Tehran to Las Piedras airport, in Falcón state, did not give the expected result: reliable gasoline production.

A month has passed since the first flight of the Persian airline Mahan Air, sanctioned by the United States, landed on the Paraguaná peninsula. Still, the lack of gasoline is throughout the country. The import of gas by Wilmer Ruperti through Maroil Trading Inc., at the beginning of last month, has not been sufficient to cover the internal demand of 80,000 barrels per day, 40,000 barrels less than it was before the confinement due to the pandemic of the COVID-19.

The supply chain to cover this requirement, without domestic production, needs a reliable supplier such as Rosneft. Something that will be difficult, because the trading companies that have relations with PDVSA will be sanctioned sooner rather than later by the United States Treasury, according to Executive Order 13884. The application of this measure would lead them to lose the market that uses the dollar to trade the merchandise, as happened to the two subsidiaries of the Russian oil company two months ago.

Therefore, aware that the gasoline crisis is a time bomb that can explode at any moment, Maduro turns to the Ayatollah regime in a desperate attempt. It seeks to start up Paraguaná Refining Complex facilities, which was being operated by Russia in 2019. This time he is betting

on Iran, which is also sanctioned by the Trump government. So, they do not have to worry about the financial consequences for companies that are related to PDVSA. This relationship also allows Rouhani to enter the United States backyard to avenge General Qasem Soleimani's death, who was eliminated by US forces earlier this year.

So far, Iran-US conflict has been confined to the Persian Gulf and the Middle East. However, the dispatch of the Iranian tankers to the South American country opens the possibility of another theater of operations, within the asymmetric war that Tehran is maintaining against Washington. Iran uses the narrative that he brings gasoline to Venezuela because it is suffering from the United States' "criminal sanctions." To reinforce it, Iran warns in a letter to the UN secretary-general that it will take action against the United States if the US threatens its shipment of fuel to Venezuela. Iran also uses the Swiss ambassador's channel to communicate to the State Department the warning that "any possible threat" against their ships would pose.

Maduro and Rouhani's intention are clear: "to break" the strategy of maximum pressure of the Trump administration against the Venezuela Criminal Enterprise. If they succeed, it will mean the loss of authority of the American power in their continent. And all countries that have ties to the failed-mafia state could embolden themselves and use the same narrative.

On the other hand, if the United States forcibly dissuades Iranian tankers from returning to their country, the Ayatollah regime could retaliate in the Strait of Hormuz, driving the price of oil to \$ 100 or more. A scenario that Iran wants to harm the United States economy further and consequently, Trump's re-election in November. In this situation, Trump, the presidents of Lima Group, and those TIAR's members who invoked its application against the Maduro failed-mafia state must alert the UN Security Council and the international community with the determination of the provocation that it represents the shipment of Iranian tankers to Venezuela. Because if the narrative of Rouhani, sponsor of terrorist groups, and the Maduro Criminal Company is accepted, the door will be opened for the Iranian tankers to serve as Trojan horses to transport fuel, weapons, equipment, cocaine, gold, among others, with unimaginable consequences for the region.

For this reason, Maduro and Rouhani join forces to challenge Trump in Venezuela.