

Obama Declares Cuba and Venezuela National Security Threats

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The executive order allows the President to use national emergency resources to fight the threat, such as enforcing sanctions against the country.

The United States declared a national emergency to deal with perceived “threats” in Cuba and Venezuela on Friday, along with Iran, Libya, Ukraine, Zimbabwe and countries Washington claims “support terrorism.” The declarations effectively extend for another year economic sanctions already in place.

President Barack Obama warned that one of the main national security threats to the U.S. is mass undocumented immigration from Cuba, days after he ended the [“Wet Foot, Dry Foot” policy](#), which granted residency to Cubans who arrived in the U.S. without visas, reported Sputnik.

Obama used an executive order in March 2015 to declare that the situation in Venezuela has “not improved.” He cited human rights violations, persecution of political dissenters and restrictions on the freedom of the press.

When a national emergency was declared against Venezuela in 2015, Obama also ordered sanctions against seven Venezuelan officials, saying they would be banned from traveling to the United States and any and all assets and properties belonging to them would be frozen.

Under the National Emergencies Act sanctions must be renewed every year, however the executive orders Obama signed on Friday are not set to expire until two months into the Trump administration. The move appears to suggest that the Obama administration is concerned that the renewals could get overlooked in the expected chaos of Trump’s White House. If he chooses to, Trump could rescind the sanctions by executive order.

The extension of U.S. sanctions against Iran come despite the historic agreement reached last year between the two countries. The extension of sanctions against Russia, imposed in response to their actions in Ukraine and Crimea, come amidst recent hysteria about suspected interference in the U.S. election by the Putin regime. Some have speculated that Trump’s pick for foreign secretary, Rex Tillerson, may soon move to remove the sanctions given they block a multi-billion dollar project he negotiated with Russia while CEO of ExxonMobile.

The United States currently has 31 officially declared national emergencies.

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