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Russian Official Accuses U.S. of Preparing Military Intervention in Venezuela

By Reuters

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Bruno Kelly / Reuters

A top Russian security official on Tuesday accused the United States of deploying forces in Puerto Rico and Colombia in preparation for a military intervention in Venezuela to topple Moscow's ally, President Nicolas Maduro.

Venezuela has been plunged into political turmoil and was rocked by violent clashes at the weekend. The United States and a raft of other countries have backed the country's opposition, while China and Russia have stood by Maduro's government.

"...The United States is preparing a military invasion of an independent state," Nikolai Patrushev, secretary of the Russian Security Council, was quoted as saying in an interview with weekly newspaper Argumenty i Fakty.

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"The transfer of American special operations forces to Puerto Rico, the landing of U.S. forces in Colombia and other facts indicate the Pentagon is reinforcing its troops in the region in order to use them in an operation to remove ... Maduro from power."

Patrushev said in the interview that Washington had asked Moscow for consultations on Venezuela and that Russia had agreed, but that U.S. officials had repeatedly postponed them under false pretexts.

U.S. officials have previously dismissed Russian allegations about U.S. plans for Venezuela as baseless "propaganda."

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