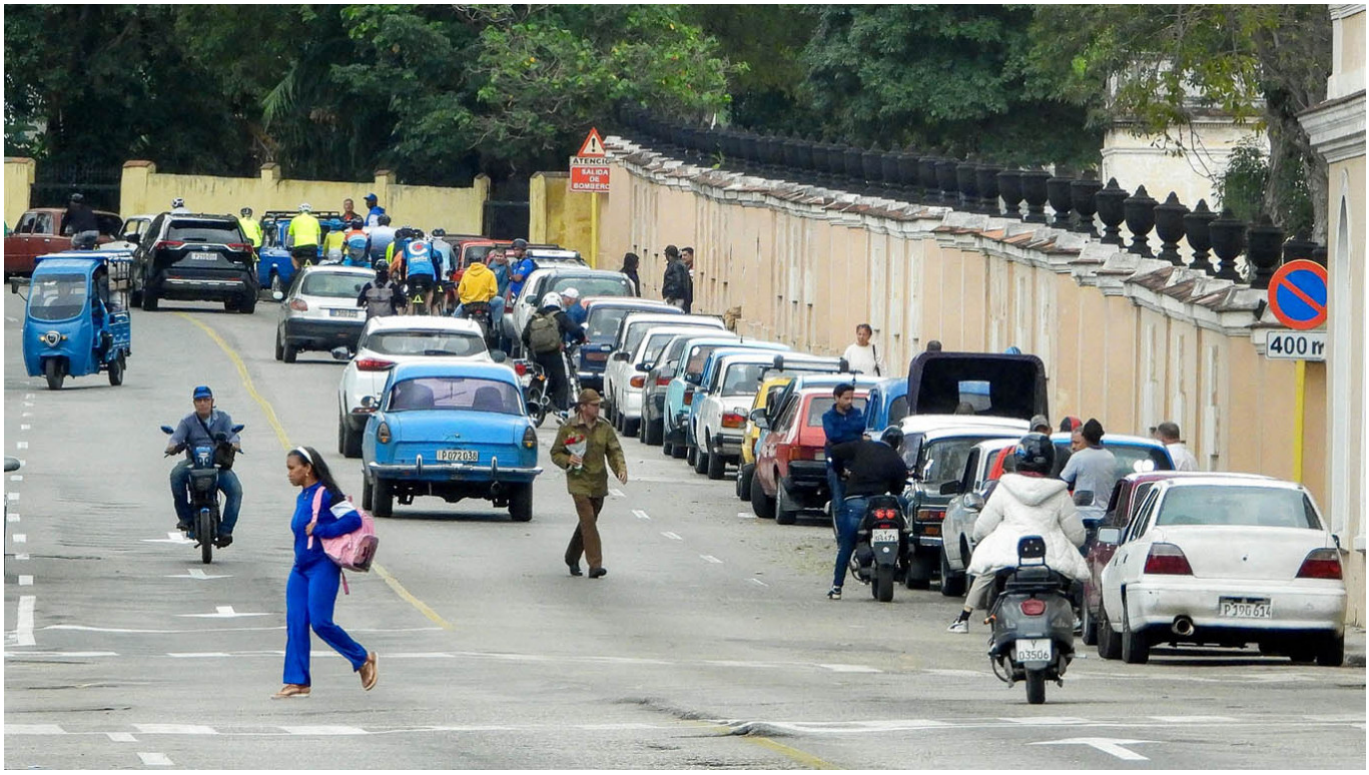
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Lavrov Condemns U.S. Military and Economic Pressure on Cuba

By AFP

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Adalberto Roque/ AFP

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Monday that economic and military "pressure" on its ally Cuba was "unacceptable," remarks made after the Trump administration escalated its threats against the communist-run island nation.

Last week, U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order threatening additional tariffs on countries that sell oil to Cuba, which is experiencing its worst economic crisis in decades.

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel denounced the move, calling it an attempt to "suffocate" his country's economy.

Lavrov reaffirmed "the unacceptability of economic and military pressure on Cuba, including the disruption of energy supplies to the island," according to a readout of his call with Cuban

counterpart Bruno Rodriguez.

He said the disruption of energy supplies to the island "threatens to seriously worsen the economic and humanitarian situation in the country" and reiterated Moscow's "firm commitment to continue providing Cuba with the necessary political and material support."

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AFP reporters have seen Cubans gathering in long lines at gas stations in Havana following the U.S. tariff announcement.

Tensions between the United States and Cuba have grown in the wake of the Trump administration's shock capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, whose country was a crucial source for oil exports to Cuba.

Even before, the Caribbean island had faced rolling blackouts amid its most serious economic crisis since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, its former principal benefactor.

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