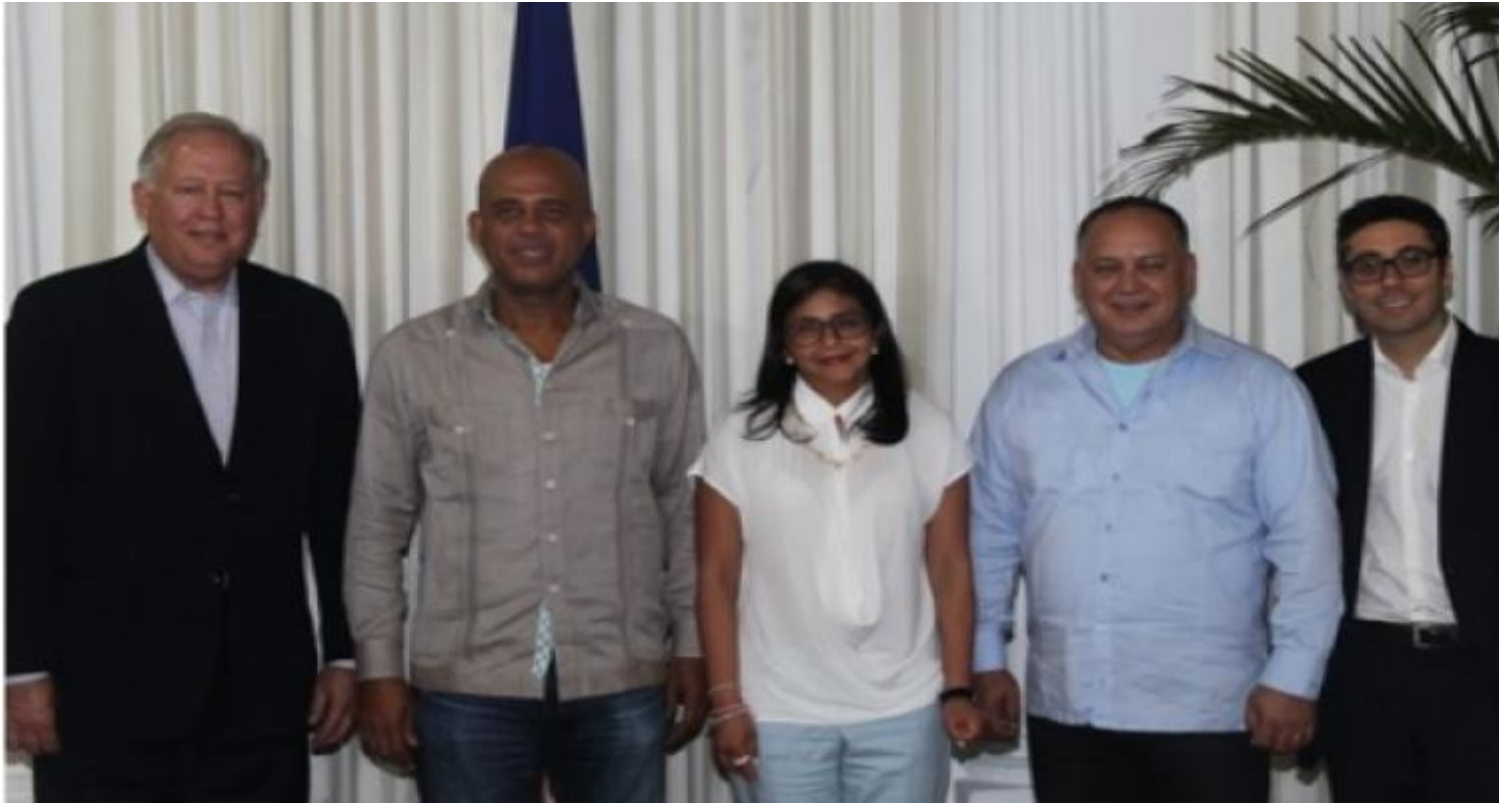


Venezuela and U.S. Discuss Normalizing Relations



Port-au-Prince, June 15 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Top diplomats from Venezuela and the United States met on Saturday in Haiti in an attempt to normalize bilateral relations. The encounter was mediated by the host country's president Michel Martelly. During the meeting, the delegations discussed common areas of agreement, including support for the Haitian people in their struggle against Cholera.

"There is an issue next week that cannot wait, and that is the problem of Cholera in Haiti. We are going to send a commission from Venezuela, as well as the United States, to try and help. And we are going to ask for support from the Cuban government," said Venezuelan National Assembly President Diosdado Cabello who led the country's delegation at the meeting together with Foreign Minister Delcy Rodriguez.

The Venezuelan team met with U.S. State Department Counselor Thomas Shannon and the Ambassador to Haiti Pamela White. The meeting took place behind closed doors at the Presidential Palace in Port-au-Prince and lasted more than an hour and a half. "We held a work meeting in Haiti with Counselor Thomas Shannon and the U.S delegation en route to normalize relations," said Rodriguez on her Twitter account.

Few details have been released about the meeting, however, according to Cabello, Venezuela is looking to reestablish relations with the United States that are based on respect for international law and the free self-determination of the people. "What we ask for is more respect and consideration," said Cabello.

"And there is the possibility of a common agenda established within the framework of mutual respect." However, he explained that there are interests that are looking to keep Venezuela and the United States at odds. "They have tried to attack and sabotage this initiative to keep us from normalizing relations between the two countries. We believe that we have to take advantage of these moments," said Cabello.

Relations between Caracas and Washington were strong under conservative neoliberal governments in the South American nation. Tensions increased, however, after late President Hugo Chavez took office in 1999. Tensions rose during the administration of George W. Bush, which supported the Venezuelan failed coup attempt in 2002 against Chavez. In 2008, Caracas ended relations with Washington and in 2014 the administration of President Nicolas Maduro ordered three U.S. diplomats to leave the country on charges of promoting violence.

Relations between the two nations have plunged to their worst levels after Washington imposed economic sanctions against Venezuela due to alleged abuses against protesters during a round of violent street blockades, launched by the right-wing opposition in 2014.

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