

America's Backyard on Fire: Venezuela, Global Escalation, and the Road Ahead

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After a brief break for Christmas and the New Year, I was joined once again by national security expert David Pyne to discuss a rapidly deteriorating global situation that now places America's own hemisphere squarely in the crosshairs. What has long been warned about is no longer theoretical. Events unfolding in Venezuela signal a major escalation with consequences that stretch far beyond South America.

The Strategic Importance of Venezuela

For more than a decade, concerns have been raised about hostile nation-states establishing a military foothold in Venezuela. Iranian influence, Russian and Chinese involvement, and even Hezbollah activity have all been documented and discussed for years. The prospect of missiles and terrorist training operations operating just miles from U.S. territory has remained a persistent national security threat.

Recent actions by the Trump administration have brought these concerns into sharp focus. The removal of Venezuela's president was presented publicly as a decisive turning point. While many welcomed the show of force as long overdue, David Pyne cautioned that removing a single individual does not equate to regime change. Venezuela's military and communist power structure remain intact, and the situation is far from resolved.

A Tactical Victory, Not a Strategic One

David described the operation as an undeniable tactical success but warned it has not yet translated into a strategic victory. The Maduro-aligned regime continues to exercise control, cracking down on opposition and suppressing internal dissent. Public jubilation following the operation has quickly given way to fear as security forces move aggressively against civilians believed to oppose the government.

This reality echoes past U.S. military engagements where early declarations of success masked longer-term instability. Without sustained pressure or a clear endgame, the operation risks becoming another unfinished conflict with serious unintended consequences.

Cuba, Russia, and China in the Hemisphere

The conversation expanded to Cuba's deep involvement in Venezuela, including reports of thousands of Cuban intelligence and security personnel operating inside the country. Casualties among Cuban forces during the raid underscore how entrenched Havana remains in propping up the regime.

Russia and China also loom large. David warned that both nations are likely increasing military support to Venezuela, potentially supplying advanced weapons systems, air defense capabilities, and even ballistic missiles capable of striking the U.S. mainland. Rather than deterring adversaries, aggressive action could drive Venezuela deeper into a military alliance with America's chief rivals.

The risk, he explained, is the emergence of a modern version of the Cuban Missile Crisis—this time involving Venezuela and backed by Russia and China.

Mexico, Colombia, and Regional Instability

As the United States applies pressure to Venezuela, ripple effects are spreading throughout the region. Cuba's oil lifeline is threatened, and Mexico and Colombia—both led by Marxist-aligned governments—are signaling resistance. There is growing concern that economic blockades or military pressure could expand beyond Venezuela, dragging additional nations into the conflict.

While the idea of direct war with Mexico remains unlikely, the possibility of special operations against cartels or expanded naval quarantines cannot be dismissed given the current trajectory.

Greenland and the Arctic Front

The discussion also touched on President Trump's renewed focus on Greenland as a strategic military asset. With Russia and China increasing their presence in the Arctic, Greenland has emerged as a critical location in great-power competition.

David explained that from a military standpoint, the United States already dominates Greenland's security, with Denmark largely outsourcing defense responsibilities to Washington. While Trump's comments sparked controversy, the underlying strategic logic reflects a broader shift toward hemispheric and Arctic defense priorities.

Russia, Ukraine, and the Collapse of Peace Prospects

Turning to Eastern Europe, David offered a sobering assessment of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Recent drone attacks near President Putin's residence, including strikes against sensitive command infrastructure, have further escalated tensions. Confusion fueled by AI-generated footage has only deepened mistrust and uncertainty.

Despite earlier momentum toward peace, David argued that negotiations are now farther from resolution than at almost any point since President Trump returned to office. A revised U.S.-backed peace plan contains multiple provisions Russia considers unacceptable, including force levels, territorial concessions, reparations, and unrestricted weapons transfers to Ukraine.

As a result, the prospect of a negotiated settlement appears increasingly remote.

A Dangerous Template for 2026

As the program concluded, David warned that the events unfolding now may represent a template for what lies ahead. Multiple regions are moving closer to open conflict, alliances are hardening, and escalation is becoming the default response rather than the exception.

The combination of hemispheric instability, great-power rivalry, AI-driven disinformation, and unresolved wars points toward a volatile and dangerous year ahead. What is happening in Venezuela is not an isolated incident—it is part of a much larger global realignment that could soon impact Americans far closer to home.