

**Jose Cardenas**

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**From:** Jose Cardenas  
**Sent:** Friday, January 22, 2021 1:24 PM  
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**Cc:** Jim Link  
**Subject:** Guyana-Venezuela border controversy heats up

Dear Colleagues,

I wanted to share this update on the Guyana-Venezuela border dispute. Obviously, we all know that stoking an international incident is in the playbook of every besieged dictatorship.

But given the tensions in Venezuela it makes it all the more dangerous...

Best Regards,

José R. Cárdenas  
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## **Guyana - Venezuela border controversy heats up**

Long standing **tensions between Guyana and Venezuela**, which claims an area that comprises two-thirds of the smaller English-speaking South American country, flared up again this month. (See last week's Updates.) Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro issued a decree to establish a new "Territory for the development of the Atlantic Facade" in the disputed Essequibo region and said, on Twitter, that he intends to reconquer the area. The Guyana government subsequently rejected the decree.

Guyana's government said that, as of last week, Venezuelan warships were in Guyana's territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone. (South Florida Caribbean News) Guyana has deployed more army troops along its disputed border with Venezuela and the U.S. has stepped up cooperation with Guyana. Admiral Craig Faller, commander of the US Southern Command, visited Guyana last week in a show of support. (MercoPress)

The border dispute is before the International Court of Justice, but Venezuela rejects the court's authority, reports Reuters. (Guyana Times has more on the legal proceedings before the ICJ and timelines.)

While the area's riches include gold, diamonds and timber, the focus of Venezuela's claim is the massive offshore Liza oil field, reports Global Voices. Maduro also appears to be using the issue as a rallying point in national politics.

The Caribbean Community (Caricom) rejected Venezuela's decree, and voiced support for the "judicial process underway at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) which is intended to bring a peaceful and definitive end to the long-standing controversy between the two countries." (CMC) The issue could test Caricom, pitting the organization's loyalty to a member state against economic interest in relations with Venezuela, reports the Guyana Chronicle. International support for Guyana's position includes the U.S., Canada, and the OAS, as well as the Commonwealth. (Argus Media, Guyana Chronicle)

More broadly, Venezuela and the Maduro government "present a multidimensional security threat for Guyana, including 'sindicatos' and other armed Venezuela-based criminal groups which cross over the border and conduct criminal activities in Guyana," according to Evan Ellis, a non-resident senior associate with the Americas Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. (BN Americas)

<https://caribbeannewsupdates.blogspot.com/2021/01/guyana-venezuela-border-controversy.html>

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