

# Cuban Leader Says U.S.-Colombian Military Base Deal is “Aggression”

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HAVANA: U.S. plans to dispatch its troops at military bases in Colombia were an “act of aggression” against all Latin American states, Cuban leader Raul Castro has said.

The 10-year deal signed between the United States and Colombia on October 30 during a brief closed-door ceremony in Bogota envisions the deployment of some 800 U.S. military personnel and 600 civilian contractors at seven military bases in Colombia.

“The deployment of [U.S.] military bases in the region is...an act of aggression against Latin America and the Caribbean,” Castro told the summit of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America, ALBA on Sunday.

ALBA, or the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America, was founded by former Cuban leader Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez in 2005 and now comprises nine members – Venezuela, Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Dominica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Antigua and Barbuda.

Castro added that the U.S. was seeking to “suppress by all means the territory that they always considered their backyard.”

Last week, Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez called on his country to prepare for a possible war over the deal, saying that a U.S. base is located just 20 minutes away from the capital of the country, Caracas.

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