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Palladium-Item

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ANALYSIS

Cuba faces possible 'takeover' by Trump



The Trump administration could soon announce criminal charges against former Cuban president Raúl Castro, and experts say the move is a sign of more U.S. military action to come in Cuba. NORLYS PEREZ/REUTERS FILE

Indicting Castro could be a first step, experts say

Aysha Bagchi
USA TODAY

The federal government's moves to indict former Cuban President Raúl Castro will ramp up pressure for regime change in Cuba and could be a prelude to a U.S. military operation, just as the Trump administration sent troops into Venezuela in January to capture indicted Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

But some legal experts say that while an indictment could signal the Trump administration plans to take Castro by force, it would be legally questionable, just as the Venezuela operation was. And by leaking the effort to seek charges against Castro for allegedly ordering humanitarian planes to be shot down in international airspace in 1996, U.S. officials haven't helped ensure a potential military operation is unexpected and covert.



The Trump administration's aggressive foreign policy actions have raised concerns that Cuba is next to be pushed into a regime change by the United States. ADALBERTO ROQUE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES FILE

"If I were the Cuban government, I would be very concerned, given everything Trump's been saying, that this was a fig leaf to cover an upcoming in-

vasion," Mitchell Epner, a former federal prosecutor, told USA TODAY.

"I do think that they'll indict Raúl Castro and then snatch him or use that as a way to compel regime change there," said Dave Aronberg, a former state attorney for Florida's Palm Beach County.

President Donald Trump has been speaking for months about a "takeover" of the longtime communist country. The Trump administration's recent military strikes against Venezuela and Iran have heightened beliefs that the president might actually use force against the Caribbean island nation.

Florida Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis said he wants the United States to help bring regime change almost in the same breath as he praised the

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State's push to reinvent high school gains steam

Aleksandra Appleton
CHALKBEAT INDIANA

Adam Harmon and Raj Jain were designing rockets.

The two juniors in Brent Schulz's aerospace engineering class at Center Grove High School worked on computer-aided design software that Schulz's students begin learning as freshmen. For them, this lesson during a school day last month wasn't just academic: After school, they put their knowledge to the test at a paid internship with Speedway Composites, where they manufacture parts for the C8 Corvette.

"Racing is aerospace engineering upside down," said Schulz, who connected the students to the company when the latter was looking for interns.

While their goal of studying engineering in college is still more than a year away, the juniors in Indiana's Center Grove school district see the value of starting internships now.

"In engineering, it can help a lot, because every internship you have builds on itself, and that helps you get a job way easier once you get done," Harmon said.

Harmon and Jain are not alone. More high schoolers are preparing for work, and more schools and employers are helping them find work opportunities, as Indiana shifts to a high school model that emphasizes career experience.

In a makerspace in a South Bend charter school, students operate Bend Manufacturing, taking machining and 3D printing orders from local businesses. And on a farm at Indian Creek High School, students care for a cattle herd as part of Creek Cattle Company.

The ultimate test of whether every Indiana student can access some kind of work-based learning if they want it is coming up. Thousands of students beginning with the Class of 2029 will need the hours of career experience required for the top-tier enrollment and employment diplomas. Under the diploma seals adopted by the state in late 2024, many will also need career and technical education courses, and paths toward earning technical certificates.

That means that over the next year, they'll need programs and employers able and willing to train and hire them. In preparation, schools, businesses, and other organizations have been expanding career education capacity at a rapid pace by growing existing

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Sexual misconduct conviction leads to 4-year term for man

Douglas Walker
Richmond Palladium-Item
USA TODAY NETWORK

RICHMOND, IN — A Richmond man who had been accused of sexually abusing a pre-teen girl has been sentenced to four years in prison.

Damon Eugene Jackson II, 33, was originally charged with child molesting,

a Level 1 felony carrying up to 40 years in prison.

However, after negotiating a deal with prosecutors, the Richmond man pleaded guilty to sexual misconduct with a minor, a Level 4 felony with a maximum 12-year sentence.

Wayne Superior Court Judge Ronald Moore recently imposed a six-year sentence with two years suspended. Jack-

son will be on probation for two years upon his release from prison.

Jackson also received credit for 342 days already spent in the Wayne County Jail. He will be required to register with local authorities as a sex offender in the communities where he resides and works.

Richmond police said Jackson was accused of sexually assaulting the child

in April 2025. Interviewed by police that month, he denied the allegations.

According to court records, the Richmond man has earlier convictions for possession of meth, auto theft, resisting law enforcement and invasion of privacy.

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