

《美国副总统:委内瑞拉危机仍有和平解决的可能》

The United States "will not stand by as Venezuela crumbles," Vice President Mike Pence said Sunday, but he emphasized a peaceful path even as he stood by President Donald Trump's startling warning that US military action remained a possibility.

"We have many options for Venezuela, but the president also remains confident that working with all of our allies across Latin America we can achieve a peaceable solution," Pence said in a news conference alongside Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos, as he began a week-long Latin America tour of four countries.



Handout picture released by the Colombian presidency press office showing Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos (L) shaking hands with US Vice President Mike Pence during a joint press conference at the Presidential guest house in Cartagena, Colombia on August 13, 2017. /AFP Photo

His trip comes after Trump on Friday said he was mulling a range of scenarios for crisis-hit Venezuela – "including a possible military option if necessary".

Trump's comment drew condemnation from Caracas, which called the threat "reckless" and "craziness".

The rest of Latin America – even countries strongly opposed to Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro – also strongly rejected it.





Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos (L) walks next to US Vice President Mike Pence at the Presidential

guest house in Cartagena, Colombia on August 13, 2017. /AFP Photo?

Santos reaffirmed that regional stance by saying he told Pence frankly "that the possibility of a military intervention shouldn't even be considered".

He added: "The Latin American continent, every country in Latin America, would not favor any form of military intervention."

Colombia, Venezuela's neighbor, is a stalwart US ally and a fierce critic of Maduro and his policies.

But Colombia and many other Latin American countries have bitter memories of past US adventures in the region, including invasions, the propping up of military dictators and the sponsorship of guerrilla groups and paramilitaries.

Pence's trip to Colombia, Argentina, Chile, and Panama is dominated by US efforts to find joint action with Latin American partners to increase pressure on Maduro.



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro addresses the all-powerful pro-Maduro assembly which has been placed over the National Assembly and tasked with rewriting the constitution, in Caracas on August 10, 2017. /AFP Photo

Washington has already imposed unilateral sanctions on Maduro and nearly two dozen of his officials over the establishment of a new loyalist body, the all-powerful Constituent Assembly, that supersedes the legislature controlled by the opposition.

Specifically on the threat of military action, Pence said: "President Trump is a leader who says what he means and means what he says."

But he emphasized his trip was "to marshal the unprecedented support of countries across Latin America to achieve by peaceable means the restoration of democracy in Latin America, and we believe it is achievable by those means."

