

U.S. officials defend their Venezuela strategy

BY NORA GÁMEZ TORRES AND MICHAEL WILNER
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The Biden administration was on the defensive Monday over its policy bet that elections in Venezuela would dislodge strongman Nicolás Maduro, who was declared the winner in Sunday's presidential election despite several irregularities and polls indicating his defeat.

In a call with reporters, senior administration officials fielded questions about what the U.S. would do next and whether the Biden administration's tactics, which included lifting some oil sanctions and releasing prisoners, had failed to deliver democratic change in the South American country.

The officials defended those decisions as having made it possible for an opposition candidate to be included on ballots — and said they were prepared for the possibility that Sunday's election would not lead to change in Venezuela's government.

"I would like to underscore that despite all the problems, which we're discussing now, the fact that Venezuela did, in fact, hold an election yesterday, which allowed an opposition candidate to be on the ballot and for the voting process to unfold, only came about as a result of the calibrations that we've done with our sanctions policy over the last year," one of the officials said.

The officials said their principal concern was that the Venezuelan National Electoral Council announced a result "that does not track with data that we have received through quick count mechanisms

and other sources, which suggests that the result that was announced may be at odds with how people voted."

The electoral council, under Maduro's control, said he beat opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez 51.2% to 44.2%, based on data obtained from 80% of the voting stations. Edison Research, a trusted pollster that conducts Election Day exit polls in the United States, projected that Gonzalez had won in a landslide with 65% of the vote.

Earlier on Monday, White House National Security Advisor John Kirby said the United States would not rush to react to the results until the situation was clearer.

"We're going to hold our judgment until we see the actual tabulation of the results," he said, urging Venezuelan electoral authorities to release the data.

U.S. senior officials declined to tell reporters what the U.S. response would look like if the accusations of fraud are proven correct.

BUYING TIME

Sunday's election was an important benchmark for the Biden administration in its dealings with Maduro.

Eager to reject the Trump administration's "maximum pressure" policy, which imposed heavy sanctions on the country's oil industry and rallied international diplomatic support for an alternate opposition-led interim government, Biden officials sought a different course.

Under Biden, support for the interim government led by opposition leader Juan Guaidó dwindled until the Venezuelan opposition got rid of it. Biden officials also

engaged in talks with Maduro's representatives to negotiate the lifting of oil sanctions in exchange for Maduro agreeing to allow opposition figures to run in a presidential election that was supposed to be fair and monitored by neutral international observers.

The "carrots," which included releasing two nephews of Maduro's wife imprisoned for narco trafficking in the U.S. and Alex Saab, his financier and frontman accused of money laundering, were enough to make the Venezuelan leader return to the negotiating table with the opposition. An agreement was signed between the two sides in Barbados in October last year, with the U.S.' blessing.

The Venezuelan opposition, a notoriously fractured movement, managed to unify under long-term Maduro opponent Maria Corina Machado, who ran a primary campaign so successful that the Maduro-controlled Supreme Court did not allow her to be on the final ballot. Bending to last-minute international pressure, elections authorities allowed Gonzalez to run in her place.

As the harassment against Machado and her campaign staff continued, it was clear ahead of Sunday's election that Maduro was walking away from the agreement.

For several months, the Biden administration has been facing criticism for supporting an election that many said was likely to be a sham. Several Cuban-American politicians, including U.S. Senator Marco Rubio, R-Fla., had warned that Maduro would use negotiations to buy time and get concessions from the United States.

In a February report, the

U.S. intelligence community assessed that Maduro was likely to cling to power and not concede defeat in the presidential election.

On X, Rubio said the Maduro regime "carried out the most predictable and ridiculous sham election in modern history" and blamed the Biden administration for easing sanctions as part of a deal for the election in Venezuela.

On Monday, Biden administration officials were asked if they thought their policy had failed. Responding to their critics, they revealed that the administration had also planned for the election not to lead to a power transition in Venezuela.

"We always knew there were a variety of scenarios for this election as they unfolded," one of the officials said. "And the events as they took place this week were certainly among those scenarios considered and for which we have been planning."

Some Venezuela observers have said there is still a chance that the election could lead to changes because some members of the Venezuelan government might realize that Maduro staying in power after a fraudulent election will be an obstacle to seeking international legitimacy and access to financial resources.

A senior U.S. official said that these views also inform U.S. policy.

"I think that the Maduro authorities understand that if it is proven that they committed fraud in holding this election, then that is not good for their longer-term objectives of normalizing Venezuela's broader diplomatic and political relations in the region," the official said. "And, frankly, it's not good for their own political position within Venezuela. That is all part of the calculus here."

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Notice of Community Meeting and Public Hearings for Proposed Brownfield Area Designation Pursuant to Florida's Brownfields Redevelopment Act

Representatives for WGC 97th Property, LLC will hold a community meeting on August 6, 2024, from 5:30 p.m. until not later than 7:00 p.m., at the Hialeah Gardens Branch Public Library, 13451 NW 107th Ave., Hialeah Gardens, FL 33018. This community meeting will be held for the purpose of affording interested parties the opportunity to provide comments and suggestions about the potential designation of land located approximately at 16300 NW 97th Avenue, Hialeah, Florida 33018, identified by Folio Number 04-2017-001-0070, as a Brownfield Area. This Community Meeting will also address future development and rehabilitation activities planned for the site.

The designation is being made pursuant to Section 376.80, Florida Statutes, of Florida's Brownfield Redevelopment Act, and will involve two public hearings before the City of Hialeah City Council on August 13 and August 27, 2024, at 5:30 p.m., to be held in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 3rd Floor, 501 Palm Avenue, Hialeah, FL.

For more information regarding the community meeting and/or the public hearings or to provide comments and suggestions regarding designation, development, or rehabilitation at any time before or after the community meeting and/or public hearings, please contact Brett C. Brumund, Esq., who can be reached by telephone at (305) 640-5300, U.S. Mail at The Goldstein Environmental Law Firm, P.A., 2100 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, Suite 710, Coral Gables, FL 33134, and/or email at bbrumund@goldsteinenvlaw.com.



CITY OF DORAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

All residents, property owners and other interested parties are hereby notified of a **COUNCIL MEETING** on **August 14, 2024 beginning at 6:00 PM** to consider an amendment to the City's Official Zoning Map. The City Council will consider this item for **FIRST READING**. The meeting will be held at the **City of Doral, Government Center, Council Chambers located at 8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, Florida, 33166**.

The City of Doral proposes to adopt the following Ordinance:

ORDINANCE No. 2024-23

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DORAL, FLORIDA, APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CITY'S OFFICIAL ZONING MAP FROM MULTI FAMILY RESIDENTIAL 4 (MF-4) AND INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL (IC) TO DOWNTOWN MIXED USE (DMU) FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 4400 NW 87 AVENUE, DORAL, FL; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

HEARING NO.: 24-08-DOR-04

APPLICANT: Trump Endeavor 12 LLC c/o Felix M. Lasarte, Esq. (the "Applicant")

PROJECT NAME: Trump Endeavor 12 LLC Rezoning to DMU

PROPERTY OWNER: Trump Endeavor 12 LLC

LOCATION: 4400 NW 87 Avenue, Doral, FL

FOLIO NUMBER: A portion of 35-3021-001-0010; 35-3028-000-0050; 35-3021-008-0010; 35-3028-029-0020; 35-3028-029-0010; 35-3022-010-0010

SIZE OF PROPERTY: ±52 acres

FUTURE LAND USE MAP CATEGORY: Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) and Urban Central Business District (UCBD) overlay

ZONING DISTRICT: Multi Family Residential 4 (MF-4) and Industrial Commercial (IC)

REQUEST: The Applicant is requesting a zoning map amendment from Multi Family Residential 4 (MF-4) and Industrial Commercial (IC) to Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) for the property located at 4400 NW 87 Avenue, to allow for the development of 1,498 new residential units and 141,694 square feet of new commercial development.

Inquiries regarding the item may be directed to the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL. The application file may be examined at the City of Doral Planning and Zoning Department located at 8401 NW 53 Terrace, Doral, FL 33166.

Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes If a person decides to appeal any decisions made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. This notice does not constitute consent by the City for introduction or admission of otherwise inadmissible or irrelevant evidence, nor does it authorize challenges or appeals not otherwise allowed by law. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person who are disabled and who need special accommodations to participate in this meeting because of that disability should contact the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL no later than three (3) business days prior to the proceeding.

Connie Diaz, MMC
City Clerk
City of Doral

Location Map



CITY OF DORAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

All residents, property owners and other interested parties are hereby notified of a **COUNCIL MEETING** on **August 14, 2024 beginning at 6:00 PM** to consider an amendment to the Section 8 Settlement Agreement. The meeting will be held at the **City of Doral, Government Center, Council Chambers located at 8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, Florida, 33166**.

The City of Doral proposes to adopt the following Resolution:

RESOLUTION No. 23-

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DORAL, FLORIDA, APPROVING THE SEVENTH AMENDMENT TO THE SECTION 8 SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN DELCOP GROUP, LLC AND THE CITY OF DORAL; PROVIDING FOR RECORDATION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

HEARING NO.: 24-08-DOR-06

APPLICANT: DelCOP Group, LLC (the "Applicant").

FOLIO NUMBER: 35-3008-000-0041, 35-3008-000-0048, 35-3008-000-0051

REQUEST: The Applicant is requesting approval of an amendment to the Section 8 Settlement Agreement as applied to Phases IV, V, and VI of the Midtown Planned Unit Development.

Inquiries regarding the item may be directed to the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL.

Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes If a person decides to appeal any decisions made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. This notice does not constitute consent by the City for introduction or admission of otherwise inadmissible or irrelevant evidence, nor does it authorize challenges or appeals not otherwise allowed by law. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person who are disabled and who need special accommodations to participate in this meeting because of that disability should contact the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL no later than three (3) business days prior to the proceeding.

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Location Map

