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# Hughes Hubbard & Reed

## Jeremy Paner Details Legal Limitations of the Fuel Blockade on Cuba with The Washington Post

What legal authorities could authorize the U.S. to detain Russian oil tankers delivering fuel to Cuba?  
Articles & Press

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### Highlights

- Jeremy Paner discusses the legal limits of the Trump administration's fuel blockade on Cuba following the approach of a Russian oil tanker.
- Paner explains that the U.S. lacked clear legal authority to stop the tanker's entry into Cuba, distinguishing the situation from prior seizures of "stateless" or terrorism-linked vessels.
- The analysis highlights how the sanctions authority identifying the vessel as blocked property constrained enforcement options.

### March 30, 2026

Speaking to [The Washington Post](#), Jeremy Paner detailed the legal limitations of President Donald Trump's effective blockade against fuel supplies to Cuba, following a Russian oil tanker approach to the island.

As of late March 29, the Russian state-owned tanker Anatoly Kolodkin is approaching Cuba carrying an estimated 730,000 barrels of crude oil. That voyage sets up a test of the Trump administration's fuel blockade on Cuba and Russia's desire to assist its longtime ally.

The tanker is expected to reach an oil storage facility in Cuba by early March 31. Dmitry Peskov, a sanctioned Russian government spokesman, told journalists the delivery of the crude oil was "raised well in advance ... with our American counterparts."

According to Paner, as a matter of law, the Trump administration is constrained in detaining the tanker, as this is a very different situation than late last year when the U.S. seized terrorism-linked vessels off the coast of Venezuela.

In those earlier cases, the vessels were either "stateless" under international law or connected to entities sanctioned pursuant to counterterrorism sanctions authorities. Neither of those circumstances appear applicable to the Anatoly

Kolodkin.

Absent a nexus to terrorism, Paner said, “the legal authority to rush out and grab stuff outside the territory of the United States is relatively limited.”

[Read the article.](#)

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**Jeremy P. Paner**

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