



Trump's American empire: US operations are firing up across the continent

## Description

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Trump

President Donald Trump's failing war in Iran is grabbing most of the headlines. But Latin America is still central to current US colonial ambitions. American shadow war operations are popping up left, right and centre as the US seeks to dominate.

Trump's 2025 national security strategy [said](#) as much. The US wants to ensure:

the Western Hemisphere remains reasonably stable and well-governed enough to prevent and discourage mass migration to the United States.

And that [those pliable governments](#)

cooperate with us against narco-terrorists, cartels, and other transnational criminal organizations.

Trump and his cronies [want](#)

a Hemisphere that remains free of hostile foreign incursion or ownership of key assets, and that supports critical supply chains.

Decoded, the US [seeks](#) to control the markets in the Americas, and:

we want to ensure our continued access to key strategic locations. In other words, we will assert and enforce a "Trump Corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine.

The [Monroe Doctrine](#), many Canary readers will be aware, basically means US political and economic dominance of the continent. The "Donroe" doctrine, as the new version has been called, is Trump's typically egotistical update.

The US started 2026 with an attack on Venezuela and various threats against neighbours like [Greenland](#) [Canada](#) and others. Since then, it was steered "with the help of Israel" into a war with Iran. And spent the last few months getting an arse-kicking in a dramatically failing conflict there.

But the Americas have not been forgotten in Trump's vision. The US military and US intelligence have been busy while Iran took the headlines.

## Trump "the Venezuela raid

The 3 January US attack on Venezuela was an opening salvo of sorts. The legally questionable at-sea airstrikes which accompanied it [are still happening](#). The Americans say these are against "narco-terrorists". The truth is much more complicated.

President Nicolas Maduro [remains](#) in detention. His replacement Delcy Rodriguez, it seems clear, is a US stooge.

The Guardian was [told](#) by four anonymous sources in late January.

Before the US military snatched Venezuela's president, Nicolás Maduro, earlier this month, Delcy Rodríguez and her powerful brother pledged to cooperate with the Trump administration once the strongman was gone.

Rodriguez has [since](#) started shipping oil to Israel. And on 27 May, CBC [reported](#) that cartel-related probes against her had been quietly dropped:

The Trump administration has quietly instructed federal prosecutors in Miami to avoid pursuing criminal investigations into Venezuela's acting President Delcy Rodríguez, a longtime target of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, according to current and former U.S. law enforcement officials.

The narrative of state collusion with cartels, wobbly as it is, was used to justify the January raid. And narcotic gang activity seems to be the main way Trump is justifying his bid for hemispheric control.

## Joint strikes in Central America

The NYT [reported](#) on 28 May that Guatemala has agreed to carry out strikes with the US:

President Bernardo Arévalo of Guatemala agreed to both airstrikes and other military action in a call with Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, two of those people said, with operations to start as early as next month.

Adding:

It was unclear what other military activities could be included in the agreement.

And in Panama, a defence and transit deal for the strategic cross-continental canal has been [locked in](#) with the US:

U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Panamanian President José Raúl Mulino signed memorandums of understanding that provide U.S. military vessels with toll-free, priority access through the Panama Canal.

The agreements also encompass expanded joint training exercises, cyber defense collaboration, and the potential reactivation of former U.S. military bases in Panama.

The US also [designated](#) two Brazilian gangs as terrorist organisations on 29 May:

The announcement, made by Marco Rubio, the secretary of state, on Thursday, is being widely seen in Brazil as a setback for Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the president who had strongly opposed the designation and a boost for Bolsonaro, the far-right senator and main challenger in October's presidential election.

Flavio Bolsonaro is the son of fascist former president Jair Bolsonaro. Both are far-right fellow travellers of the Trump administration. Flavio Bolsonaro [visited](#) the White House earlier in May 2026.

## Homeland empire

The CIA [reportedly](#) killed a mid-level cartel boss with a car bomb in Mexico City in March. That followed a [US-backed cartel shootout](#) in Mexico, also in March. Two CIA officers were [killed](#) after a drug lab raid in April. Official denials followed those reports.

US-backed troops in Ecuador [allegedly](#) tortured dairy workers and blew up a farm in March. Cuba, naturally, is on the [regime change list](#) too. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) paramilitaries are carrying out [a racist war](#) on poor, maligned and undocumented workers on the home front.

*El País* [revealed](#) on 7 May that Trump, his Argentine ally Gabriel Milei and the Honduran government were:

conspiring to create a channel for disseminating fake news with the intention of spreading misinformation and destabilizing the governments of Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico.

El Salvador Trump-allied president Nayib Bukele is also [deeply implicated](#) in US fascistic deportation plans.

The list goes on as Trump seeks to remake the continent in his own image.

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## Trump's modern settler empire

The new right-wing narratives of illegal migration and drug trafficking have merged with the climate of militarism, counter-terrorism and colonial policing forged during the War on Terror. Trump has been able to tie these together to wage a war against the exploited, the racialised and the desperate.

Historian Nikhil Pal Singh [warned](#) in a recent piece for *Equator*:

familiar analytical frameworks which rely on the distinction between foreign and domestic realms, normality and legality, policing and war, cannot provide the world picture we need to grasp what's happening here.

Instead, Trump:

conflates immigrants, drugs and free trade as sources of weakness coming from outside, poisoning the blood of the country.

Trump [has married](#)

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the archaic geopolitics of a settler empire to the modern legal frameworks devised by his liberal predecessors.

Trump is losing in Iran. Few serious observers doubt it. But the other war which took off in 2026 is making inroads. The US administration is extending its violent reach across the Americas. The Americans seek to consolidate through backing fascist forces, through violence, and by using a racist narrative of narco-terrorism to justify their actions.

Keep eyes on Iran, but don't forget the so-called homeland empire. The US-Israeli war will end at some point. In Latin America, US intervention may well accelerate when it does.

*Featured image via Katelynn Jackson/U.S. Air Force via Getty Images*

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