

President Sheinbaum minimizes growing US threats to bomb Mexico

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In response to continuing US threats to bomb drug cartels in Mexico, President Claudia Sheinbaum has issued unconvincing and toothless denials that they will ever be carried out.

Asked in an interview with Fox News last Thursday whether he would “support the bombing of the Mexican drug cartels,” U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration Administrator Terrance Cole “didn’t dare to rule out” the possibility that President Trump might give the green light to the bombings:

So I know that’s been in the paper the last few days. I know that decision lies with the president. The men and women of the DEA will support the decision that comes from the president. We will complete the mission, but let’s remember we have been at war with these cartels for the last 40 years. The men and women of DEA have been consistent, they’ve been at the forefront, they’ve been at the tip of the spear, this is what we do and we will continue to support the mission and the orders that come down from the president of the United States.

Referring to these remarks, a reporter asked Sheinbaum on Friday whether she saw a US strike against the cartels as a possibility.

“No,” the president said emphatically, before pausing for five seconds to give even more emphasis to her response. “Mexico is a free, independent and sovereign country, and no foreign government would dare to violate our sovereignty,” Sheinbaum declared. “It’s not like before. Mexico has a lot of strength — national and international [strength] because of our people, because of what we represent as a government of the people,” she said. “So, no, that won’t happen.” To say the least, this displays wishful thinking on her part.

Sheinbaum also said that Mexico’s Foreign Minister Juan Ramón de la Fuente had told U.S. Ambassador Ronald Johnson that “information provided by US government institutions” — when the information pertains to the security relationship between Mexico and the US — “has to be within the framework” of agreed cooperation between the two countries. “And the ambassador agreed,” Sheinbaum claimed. But Mexico had not agreed to participate in any such initiative.

Sheinbaum stressed that Mexico wants to “collaborate with the United States on security issues,” but doesn’t want the US government to issue “statements that provide incorrect information.”

Sheinbaum then suggested that her government would consider a US strike on Mexican cartels as an “act of war” against Mexico. She added, “as I’ve said: any attempt, we have the national anthem, [el cielo] un soldado en cada hijo te dio,” that is, “heaven gave you a soldier in every son.”

She said that that Mexico’s historic foreign policy stance “will always be for the self-determination of the peoples, not only when it comes to

Mexico but all countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.”

Sheinbaum also stressed that her administration on August 12 had handed over 26 drug lords to the US for prosecution in federal courts, including a large number of Sinaloa Cartel kingpins, following up on 29 high-profile drug lords handed over to Washington in February.

But such facts hardly deter Trump and US imperialism. Instead, such actions only feed the beast. As Trump has said, Mexico and Canada “do whatever the US wants.”

Sheinbaum’s pretensions are absurd given the nearly 10,000 US troops deployed along the border, the long history of US invasions of Mexico, the CIA overflights of Mexican territory, and the gathering of intelligence that can be used for military purposes.

In March, the US annual threat assessment called cartels the “most immediate and direct threat to America’s security.” But this is a smokescreen for broader imperialist objectives, including pushing China out of Latin America.

Within the Trump administration, figures such as Vice President Vance, Attorney General Pam Bondi and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth have been pushing for direct intervention against the cartels in Mexico. There is growing political consensus in Trump circles for an outright invasion of Mexico. Mexico is even denounced as a US adversary along the lines of Iran, China and North Korea in MAGA circles.

“We will not be intimidated and we will keep America safe because of President Trump’s leadership. Not only against Iran, but also against Russia, China and Mexico,” Bondi said in response to questions by Republican Senator Lindsey Graham. “In the face of any foreign adversary, whether it tries to kill us physically or by overdosing our children with drugs, we will do everything in our power, thanks to his [Trump’s] leadership, to keep America safe,” she concluded.

The U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM), which oversees Pentagon operations across North America, including Mexico, already was involved in combating cartels as part of a “military-to-military relationship between the United States and Mexico” that is “robust and expanding,” according to testimony to Congress from U.S. Air Force general Gregory Michael Guillot. But it had previously been “sidelined” in direct operations involving Mexico.

Sources recently told journalist Ken Klippenstein that NORTHCOM has now been directed to manage the Mexico attack plans and have them ready by the middle of September. The Special Operations Command (SOCNORTH) that is part of NORTHCOM is being asked to prepare potential strike targets and “direct action,” smaller attack operations, against the Sinaloa and Jalisco New Generation cartels, among others, including air and drone strikes.

This action would be unilateral, meaning it would not involve the Mexican government, and would be conducted without its approval.

A war on the cartels is likely to fail in any event because the illicit drug trade is not something that can be fixed by military means. Cartel operations depend on proceeds from the United States. This is not a case

of foreign terrorism, but the product of conditions in the US, including the sale of weapons to Mexico.

The reality is that Washington is seeking to use the “war on drugs” as a cover for reasserting its power and strategic influence in its so-called “backyard.” And Washington’s threats are not just aimed at Mexico and Venezuela; they are aimed at the entire Latin American region.

Gen. Laura Richardson, the former commander of U.S. Southern Command, previously laid out with precision what US imperialism wants to plunder from Latin America and the Caribbean, including its rare earth elements, lithium, gold, oil, natural gas, light sweet crude, copper, abundant food crops and vast deposits of fresh water.

The US government and military also have their eyes on the region’s two bi-oceanic passages, the Panama Canal and the Drake’s Passage, at the tip of South America, hence the US military’s renewed interest in Argentina, as well as, no doubt, the interoceanic corridor that is being developed to the tune of tens of billions of dollars between the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico across Mexico’s Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

The Mexican-Lebanese geopolitical analyst Alfredo Jalife argues that one of the main goals of US policy is to maintain firm control over the so-called “American Mediterranean,” a term first coined in the 19th century by the geographer Alexander von Humboldt to describe the combined maritime space of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico.

Jalife says that the area took on greater geopolitical significance in the mid-20th century due to the work of US strategists Admiral Alfred Mahan and political scientist Nicholas Spykman, with Spykman describing it as the US “soft underbelly.”

US imperialism seeks to return to the 20th Century when Washington carried out dozens of military interventions in Latin America, including invasions, regime change operations, and military support and assistance to dictatorships.

The Trump administration’s openly stated goal is the concentration of US forces for a global war against China, in which Latin America constitutes a major battleground. What begins nominally as a fight against drug trafficking can evolve into the overthrow of targeted governments and a war between great powers for control of strategic resources and chokepoints.

Mounting cracks in ruling Morena party

Meanwhile, the Sheinbaum administration faces a more general crisis. There is infighting in the ruling Morena party between supporters of prior President López Obrador (AMLO) and Sheinbaum’s constituency in the ruling class.

Corruption, including that linked to cartels, continues on a large scale. A week ago, the US took action against banks it considered to be laundering cartel money, including one owned by a close López Obrador confidante. The plea bargain reached this week between the US government and the co-founder of the Sinaloa Cartel, Ismael Mario Zambada, undoubtedly leaves some in government circles concerned about their links to corruption being exposed.

Although Sheinbaum claimed earlier this year that Mexico’s economy, the 13th largest in the world in nominal GDP terms, is “doing very well,” it in fact struggles. Mexico’s economy grew 0.6 percent in the second quarter but was flat in annual terms.

Public spending is being reduced as part of Sheinbaum’s plan to scale back the deficit from the levels it reached in 2024. This has led to fewer of the job-producing construction projects seen over the last five years.

While Mexico remains the largest US trading partner, with nearly \$840 billion in two-way goods traded, Trump’s so-called America First policies

have undercut the appeal of “nearshoring” by firms looking to move to the Latin American nation to be closer to US customers. Chinese investment has slowed.

On July 31, Sheinbaum squeezed out a 90-day reprieve from Trump on a threatened tariff increase of 30 percent instead of 25 percent on goods not compliant with the United States-Mexico-Canada trade deal that Trump signed during his first term. This, however, is little more than a bandaid.

At the time, Trump wrote on social media: “We will be talking to Mexico over the next 90 Days with the goal of signing a Trade Deal somewhere within the 90 Day period of time, or longer.”

But the upcoming revision of the USMCA trade agreement with the US and Canada has put an additional drag on investment, as has an expected slowdown of the US economy.

Josué González, a security expert at the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) says, “It has been going on for eight months and it seems like three years,” such is the intensity of the daily political exchange between the US and Mexico under Trump. “Nothing like it had been seen in all this modern era. They do not seem like international or diplomatic relations, but a negotiation with a company 20 times smaller,” an attitude towards Mexico, which he describes as “absolute power” as to the whole world: “The level of pressure is brutal, as it has not been experienced at any other time.”

US pressure has “sent ripple waves across Morena and among its different tribes,” says Arturo Sarukhán, former Mexican ambassador to Washington. “It is reducing the president’s political domestic wiggle room,” and is making her choose between strengthening her position or “shielding” López Obrador’s allies.

Regardless of the ruling Morena party’s populist guise, the interests of the Mexican ruling class foreclose any response that rallies Mexicans in defense of democratic and social rights. It instead requires that the Mexican working class continue to supply cheap labor for finance capital. And as growth stagnates, there are growing pressures by creditors to cut Morena’s limited social programs and pensions.

At the same time, the Mexican ruling class as a whole is fearful that opposition to the government will grow over its embarrassing subservience to Trump, exposure of corruption and planned social cuts.

In the context of Trump’s pressure, massive inequality and overall global instability, Mexico’s ruling class will be driven to consider appeasing foreign investors by establishing a framework for martial law to crack down on social opposition in the working class, and to secure supply chains.

While the Mexican government appeases Trump, it also secures support from the Mexican Armed Forces in response to the ongoing provocations by Washington, which seek to sow divisions within the state against Morena.

The Mexican Senate recently approved legislation that will govern the performance of the National Guard (Guardia Nacional) as a Permanent Armed Force, under the leadership of the Ministry of National Defense (Sedena), which will have the responsibility of combating organized crime. The President of the Republic will hold the Supreme Command, while the High Command will correspond to the head of the Sedena.

The command of the National Guard will thus cease to be civilian and instead fall to an active Division General appointed by the Federal Executive on the recommendation of the head of the Ministry of National Defense.

The Mexican ruling class watches carefully Trump’s ongoing coup attempt to establish a fascistic dictatorship, and itself considers using such measures domestically.

These contradictions will further compound the economic damage already caused by Trump’s constant threats of tariffs, mass deportations,

military intervention, and the taxes on remittance payments from Mexicans residing in the US, which became a reality a couple of months ago.

Sheinbaum's responses to the onslaught of American imperialism have been entirely chauvinistic and reactionary. These attacks cannot be stopped nationally, or by supporting negotiations between the ruling elites, but only through the unification of workers in the US and Latin America on the basis of replacing capitalism with international socialism.



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