

Trump adds Colombia to Latin America target list

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In a major expansion of imperialist warmongering throughout the Caribbean region, US President Donald Trump denounced the president of Colombia as a narcotics trafficker and imposed major economic penalties on the country.

Trump said on Truth Social Saturday: “President Gustavo Petro, of Colombia, is an illegal drug leader strongly encouraging the massive production of drugs, in big and small fields, all over Colombia. It has become the biggest business in Colombia, by far, and Petro does nothing to stop it, despite large scale payments and subsidies from the USA that are nothing more than a long term rip off of America.”

With his typical gangster vulgarity, Trump said that Petro was a “lunatic” with “a fresh mouth toward America,” adding that he “better close up” drug operations in Colombia “or the United States will close them up for him, and it won’t be done nicely.” Only a few days before, Trump told a press briefing that Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro understood that “he doesn’t want to fuck around with the United States.”

Petro replied Sunday on X, denouncing what he described as “an act of murder. ... Mr. Trump, Colombia has never been rude to the USA; on the contrary, it has greatly admired its culture. But you are rude and ignorant toward Colombia.” He added, “Trying to promote peace in Colombia is not being a drug trafficker.”

He continued, “I don’t do business like you do—I am a socialist. I believe in solidarity, the common good, and the shared resources of humanity, the greatest of all: life, now endangered by your oil. If I’m not a businessman, then I am even less a drug trafficker. There is no greed in my heart.”

Petro is not a socialist but a bourgeois nationalist, part

of the “Pink Tide” of left-talking Latin American politicians who have promised economic and social reforms but have failed to deliver because they remain within the framework of a global capitalism system dominated by the imperialist powers.

The social media exchanges between Washington and Bogota were sparked by two US military strikes last week in the southern Caribbean. The first destroyed what the Trump administration claimed was a drug-smuggling “submarine,” leaving only two survivors, one from Colombia and the other from Ecuador.

The second strike killed three people Friday. US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth claimed the boat was operated by the National Liberation Army (ELN) guerrilla group in Colombia, which opposes the Petro government. Petro condemned the second strike, saying the boat belonged to a “humble family” of fishermen, not to the ELN.

All told, the Pentagon has conducted seven military strikes at small boats in the southern Caribbean, killing at least 32 people, since Trump announced that he was “declaring war” on drug cartels. The drone missile attacks initially hit fishing vessels from Venezuela, whose President Maduro is the target of a CIA regime-change operation that Trump made public last week.

But the victims of the missile strikes now include Trinidadians returning to that island nation after working in Venezuela and at least two boats from Colombia.

The measures ordered by Trump include an immediate halt in military and economic aid to Colombia, which came to \$210 million in the fiscal year that ended September 30. The US is by far the largest backer of Colombia’s military, providing billions of dollars in aid in recent years, in the name of fighting drug trafficking, suppressing leftist guerrilla

movements and, more recently, blocking the transit of immigrants seeking to reach the United States.

Trump also ordered a sharp increase in tariffs on Colombian exports into the United States. According to the Colombian-American Chamber of Commerce, the US accounts for 35 percent of Colombia's exports, and the country is the one of the few in South America that trades more with the US than with China. Moreover, 70 percent of Colombian imports from the US involved products for which there is no domestic source. Colombia already has a \$338 million trade deficit with the US for the first six months of 2025.

The war of words has already become economic warfare and could erupt into military violence. Press reports indicate that the Pentagon has been restoring and rebuilding Roosevelt Roads, a huge but abandoned US naval base in Puerto Rico, with hundreds of Air Force personnel deployed to repair runways and restore the control tower.

According to the *Economist*, the old base is being revived as a staging ground for US military operations in the Caribbean:

A naval flotilla now sits off the coast of Venezuela, boasting three destroyers, a guided-missile cruiser, an attack submarine and amphibious assault ships. F-35 fighter jets, MQ-9 Reaper drones and a handful of advanced spy-planes have also deployed to nearby air bases...

Curbing the [drug] trade was previously a matter of law-enforcement. Now Mr Trump is throwing the armed forces at it, and riding roughshod over the law...

The next stages depend on whether American strikes stay limited to picking off boats in international waters, or move to juicier targets deep inside Latin American soil. The Pentagon is reportedly drawing up strike options on potential targets, such as drug labs and gang leaders, inside Venezuela.

The US fleet now includes a helicopter carrier, three destroyers, a guided-missile cruiser, a nuclear-powered attack submarine and an amphibious assault ship with a

Special Forces unit on board, with a squadron of F35 stealth fighter jets flying cover.

Legal and diplomatic experts have criticized the US military incineration of small boats in international waters as violations of international law, more akin to piracy than "law enforcement." In that context, the Trump administration's decision to repatriate the two survivors of the so-called drug submarine, to Colombia and Ecuador, rather than bring them to the United States for trial, is revealing.

Trump and his fascist inner circle never tire of boasting of the great success of this one-sided warfare of multimillion-dollar missiles against small fishing boats, with Trump even claiming that every strike saves 50,000 lives by destroying large quantities of illegal drugs that would otherwise enter the United States.

But the administration has provided zero evidence of these claims—not an ounce of drugs—and now, with the opportunity to parade supposed drug smugglers before television cameras, they have instead chosen to return the survivors of last week's attack to their home countries.

Clearly they wished to avoid the legal complications that would be involved if the survivors were put on trial, including both the lack of evidence and their status as victims of violent kidnapping by the US military.



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