

US hands off Latin America! Halt Trump's killing spree!

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The sailing of the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford into Caribbean waters has dramatically escalated the threat of an imminent US imperialist war against Venezuela and Latin America more broadly.

The US military escalation comes close on the heels of "War Secretary" Peter Hegseth's latest triumphant announcement of a pair of US missile strikes over the weekend, sinking two small boats and killing six more people. This has brought the death toll from the Trump administration's criminal murder spree against unarmed civilians off South America's coasts to at least 76. There have been 20 such attacks since they began on September 2, evenly split between the southern Caribbean waters off Venezuela and the eastern Pacific coast of Colombia.

Having carried out a savage series of what the United Nations has described as "extra-judicial executions" and war crimes, US imperialism is now preparing for greater atrocities.

The USS Ford, the US Navy's largest warship, is accompanied by three guided-missile destroyers and over 4,000 personnel that make up its strike group. They are joining a US armada of at least eight warships, including a nuclear submarine, and a combined force of more than 10,000 sailors and Marines already deployed near Venezuela's shores.

This vast military force is augmented by a fleet of 10 F-35 strike fighters deployed to the recently reopened Roosevelt Roads Naval Station in Puerto Rico, as well as provocative flights by B-52 bombers near Venezuelan shores. US soldiers and Marines are carrying out exercises in both Puerto Rico and, for the first time in decades, Panama in preparation for combat deployment.

US military analysts have described the US Naval force off the northern tip of South America as the largest assembled since the first US Gulf War against Iraq in 1991. It is by far the largest force deployed in the region since the 1989 US invasion of Panama.

The claim that this unprecedented deployment is for the purpose of interdicting cocaine shipments is patently absurd. What is being prepared is a full-scale imperialist war with incalculable consequences.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a Washington-based think tank with intimate ties to the US military-intelligence apparatus, noted that the US carrier strike group is "poorly structured for counter-drug operations" but "well-structured for strikes against Venezuela." It compared the US deployment to "an archer with an arrow drawn. The stance is unstable: either launch or stand down."

That the Trump administration is preparing to drag the American people into yet another war of aggression based upon lies has been clear from the outset of its Caribbean killing spree. The designation of Venezuelan and Colombian fishermen as "enemy combatants" and "narco-terrorists" in no way legalizes their slaughter. And the pretense that Venezuela is a significant source for the flow of drugs to the US is belied by every credible report from both US intelligence and international agencies.

What are the real aims of the would-be dictator Donald Trump and the financial oligarchy that he represents?

- To topple the government of Nicolás Maduro and impose a fascist US

puppet dictatorship in its place;

- To secure unrestrained US corporate control over Venezuela's oil reserves, the largest on the planet, so as to deny them to Washington's principal strategic rival, China, and prepare for global war;
- To stave off economic crisis and financial collapse through outright plunder; and
- To impose the shackles of US neo-colonial subjugation not only on Venezuela but the entire Western Hemisphere.

The US escalation was accompanied by a report Tuesday that the British government has ordered a halt to intelligence-sharing with the US on drug trafficking in the Caribbean, where London still controls a few island remnants of its former empire.

The reason given is that the UK does not want to implicate itself in war crimes against the unarmed civilians being blown out of the water by US missiles. But British imperialism has fought shoulder to shoulder with the US in previous criminal wars of mass slaughter, from Korea to the Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. If it is expressing qualms this time, it is no doubt due to imperialist interests, rather than any newfound moral scruples. The British ruling class, on the one hand, fears that it will be left out of any carve-up of Venezuela and, on the other, is increasingly at odds with Washington on everything from the Ukraine war to ever-changing American tariffs.

Of far greater weight in terms of counter-narcotics is the announcement Tuesday by the Colombian government that it is halting all intelligence-sharing with Washington. According to US officials, Colombia has provided 85 percent of all actionable intelligence used by the Florida-based Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF) to interdict illegal drug trafficking.

Colombia broke off these ties following the inadvertent release of a photograph of a top US official at the White House holding a document with the headline "The Trump Doctrine For Colombia and the Western Hemisphere," over an AI-generated photograph depicting Venezuelan President Maduro and Colombia's President Gustavo Petro side by side in orange prison jumpsuits. The document itself calls for extending the "foreign terrorist organization" designation to Colombian drug traffickers, support for anti-President Gustavo Petro forces in Colombia and trumped-up criminal charges against Petro so he, like Maduro, can have a \$50 million bounty placed on his head.

Petro, who has described the US military's killing of Venezuelans and other Latin Americans on small boats as "murder," demanded that Washington provide an explanation for the document. Instead, it responded with still more calumnies. Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau declared, "It's very tragic for the Colombian people that they are represented by a person of such low moral character," predicting that "the Colombian people, in its great wisdom, will reject this path leading to misery, hate, and will go another way."

The “Donroe Doctrine”

What is the “Trump Doctrine” or, as it is cynically referred to in the White House, the “Donroe Doctrine”? The seminal Monroe Doctrine was promulgated in 1823 as a warning against any attempt by the reactionary monarchical powers of Europe to recolonize the newly independent republics of Latin America. With the rise of US imperialism, however, it underwent profound changes as the US laid claim to Spain’s colonies in the 1898 Spanish-American War and suppressed the revolutionary strivings of the peoples of those colonies, particularly in Cuba, in order to assert US domination.

In 1904, President Teddy Roosevelt unveiled the so-called “Big Stick” corollary to the doctrine, arrogating to US imperialism the right to exercise “police power” wherever it perceived “wrongdoing or impotence” in the hemisphere. This set the stage for some 50 direct US military interventions.

By the latter half of the 20th century, the doctrine became inextricably intertwined with the Cold War and a global anti-communist crusade that saw US-backed fascist-military dictatorships take power throughout much of South and Central America, murdering, torturing and imprisoning hundreds of thousands of workers, students and other opponents of US domination and military rule.

The “Trump Doctrine” retains all of the counterrevolutionary features that emerged in the 20th century but stripped of any of the hypocritical pretense that Washington is pursuing lofty goals of “freedom” and “democracy.” It consists of nothing more than the gangster insistence that US might makes right and that Washington will seize whatever its military power allows it.

An attack on Venezuela would be only the starting point for US aggression throughout the region.

US officials are reportedly viewing a war in South America through the lens of the 1989 Panama invasion, when Noriega was brought back to the US to stand trial on drug-trafficking charges. Venezuela, however, has a geographical area 12 times that of Panama, and its population is 10 times Panama’s 35 years ago. Moreover, the US has no military presence in Venezuela, while Panama was bifurcated by the US-run Panama Canal Zone with multiple military bases and some 13,000 US troops stationed there.

The CSIS report injects a note of sobriety into the war-drunk atmosphere in Washington, warning that, while the US is capable of launching “an extended air campaign, consisting of a series of attacks to paralyze and destabilize the Maduro regime,” such campaigns “have only succeeded when coupled with the threat or reality of a ground campaign.” Invoking the aftermath of the “shock and awe” campaign against Iraq in 2003, it warns that the US-backed right-wing opposition may prove too weak to “exert control over the country once it takes power,” leaving the Trump administration to face “the kind of protracted military effort it has tried to avoid,” i.e., another forever war, this time in its “own backyard.”

US imperialism’s foreign policy is an extension of its domestic policy by other means. Washington is preparing to launch a war against Venezuela, even as the Trump administration proclaims its war against US cities and the “enemy within.” It has waged a pitiless police state operation against immigrant workers, including, paradoxically, stripping some 600,000 Venezuelans of Temporary Protection Status, a measure that is deeply unpopular in Venezuela. Meanwhile, it is seeking the deployment of US Army troops to major urban areas to suppress opposition.

Even as Trump justifies a military strike on Venezuela with his absurd claims of the Maduro government orchestrating the flow of migrants driven by Washington’s own brutal economic sanctions and of running drug cartels, so it will inevitably seize upon an armed conflict in South

America as the pretext for demanding even greater police state powers within the US itself.

Washington is driven to seek by means of criminal violence solutions to intractable problems rooted in the contradictions of US and global capitalism. There is an appearance of lunacy in the war aims of US imperialism in Latin America. It cannot reverse the rise of China as South America’s premier trading partner with bombs and missiles, outside of an all-out world war. But that, along with drive toward fascist dictatorship, is the road upon which it is marching.

US armed aggression against Venezuela will set a flame to a social and political powder keg in Latin America, while arousing the deep-seated opposition in the US to militarism and the inevitable social attacks that will accompany another US war.

War cannot be stopped by relying on the supposed opposition to Trump of the Democratic Party. It was the Obama administration that first declared a state of national emergency in 2015, branding Venezuela “an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.” Laying the foundation for the crippling sanctions aimed at starving Venezuela into submission and unending regime-change operations, the decree was renewed by both the Trump and the Biden administrations. Whatever differences the Democrats have with Trump, largely centered on their demand for a more bellicose policy toward Russia, they above all fear a mass revolt from below.

At the same time, the Maduro government, representing the interests of sections of the Venezuelan bourgeoisie and foreign capital, is incapable of making any genuine anti-imperialist appeal to the working class and the oppressed masses of Venezuela and the Americas.

Workers on both sides of the Rio Grande must grasp the reality that they are the real target of imperialism and must join hands across national borders in a unified struggle against imperialist war and to put an end to the capitalist system which is its source.



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