

Trump welcomes Colombian President Petro at the White House after military threats

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Colombian President Gustavo Petro met with US President Donald Trump at the White House on Tuesday in a closed-door session lasting over two hours. The meeting came just days after Trump brazenly threatened Petro with military action akin to last month's US invasion of Venezuela and abduction of President Nicolás Maduro.

The encounter, hailed by Trump as a "complete success," was yet another capitulation by a figurehead of Latin America's bankrupt "Pink Tide."

Like New York pseudo-socialist mayor, Zohran Mamdani, who recently visited the White House to kiss Trump's ring and pledge partnership, Petro arrived hat in hand, pledging collaboration.

On the eve of the meeting with Petro, Trump told reporters in his usual thuggish style: "He was certainly critical before that but, somehow after the Venezuelan raid, he became very nice." Post-meeting, Trump gushed that Petro was "terrific."

Petro now apes Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum's playbook: stifling public criticisms of US policy, sweet-talking the would-be fascist emperor, and offering full-fledged collaboration plus additional tributes. Most recently, Sheinbaum has stopped oil shipments to Cuba, leaving the country with just days worth of fuel after Trump threatened to impose sanctions on Mexico.

The shift is significant. Petro once denounced NATO powers' direct role in the Gaza genocide, the execution of 126 fishermen, including Colombians, with US missile strikes on their boats since last September, and the Pentagon's kidnapping of Maduro.

As early as Trump's first week back in office, Petro backed down from blocking deportations of shackled Colombians after the White House threatened 50 percent tariffs. In September, he urged US troops to

disobey Trump's Gaza orders—prompting Treasury sanctions branding Petro a major drug trafficker and money launderer. They remain in effect.

On Tuesday, Petro insisted that, as far as he was concerned, this was all in the past. "I like honest *gringos*," he told reporters. "We may be very different, but what brings us together is freedom. And that's where the conversation began." This about a president overseeing the murder and mass repression of protesters across the United States against the anti-immigrant onslaught, whose victims include thousands of Colombians.

As Petro hobnobbed with Trump, *Slate* published the harrowing account of a Colombian mother whose family fled death threats in Colombia in 2022, only to endure the "Liam Ramos nightmare" at the Dilley, Texas migrant concentration camp before deportation. Her daughter suffered vision and hearing damage plus a bacterial infection after two months in hellish conditions. "My daughter is only 6 years old. She should not know chains or handcuffs or the terror of her family being torn apart," she wrote from Colombia. "ICE treated us like animals. Officers intimidated, restrained and deported us without regard for our humanity. ... My daughter is traumatized and cries every day."

Meanwhile, in Washington, Petro continued his rhapsodic description of the White House: "Different ways of thinking, different regimes, different powers can come together. There's no need to fight. ... 'I like you,' he told me."

The meeting itself focused on Petro's "intelligence reports" touting "Colombian efficacy" in drug interdictions and Pentagon collaboration. He handed Trump a list of alleged cartel leaders worldwide.

At one point, Trump provocatively asked Petro's

view on Maduro's kidnapping. "I am used to war," Petro replied, offering his government and state oil company Ecopetrol as an "axis" for Venezuela's economic "reactivation." True to his role as envoy of the venal Colombian ruling class, Petro begged permission to join the vultures devouring the corpse of Venezuela's oil sector.

Notably, Petro ignored Monday's White House statement celebrating the US military conquest of half of Mexico's territory 180 years ago as a "legendary victory" guiding today's Latin American policy. The Colombian bourgeoisie wants only to be recognized as a reliable junior partner.

Petro's trajectory embodies the political pedigree and degeneration of the so-called "Pink Tide," a series of left nationalist governments that used proceeds from high commodity prices to implement limited social reforms.

In 1977, at age 17, he began university studies and joined the M-19 guerrilla group until its 1991 transformation into a "respectable" bourgeois party. The fighting included efforts to reclaim land from US-backed fascist paramilitaries. In October 1985, Colombian Army forces—founded, financed, and trained by Washington—captured and tortured him for days. He was not freed until February 1987.

In 1991, he entered Congress as part of the ex-guerrilla bloc, and as early as 1994, he met Venezuelan Lt. Col. Hugo Chávez, who launched "Bolivarianism" and the Pink Tide after his 1998 election as president.

Declassified documents reveal US training, funding, and intelligence enabled the massacre of over 6,000 demobilized guerrilla members in Colombia during this period, with Petro himself under constant threat.

Notwithstanding this bloody history, under Petro, Colombia remains a NATO global partner and Washington's closest military ally in Latin America, hosting US troops and bases.

Petro's pilgrimage underscores the terminal crisis of "left" nationalism across Latin America. Self-styled progressives like Petro, Lula, Sheinbaum and the Venezuelan Bolivarian remnants, preserve capitalist exploitation while capitulating to US imperialism's demands.

Trump's threats can only succeed insofar as these regimes serve to suppress any independent revolutionary movement of the working class. The

national bourgeoisies they represent manage capital within the imperialist-controlled nation-state system, offering repression, cheap labor and resources at home and collaboration abroad.

Colombia's NATO status, joint anti-drug operations, and bases make it Washington's unsinkable aircraft carrier for subjugating the hemisphere. Petro's "frank gringos" line whitewashes this as "liberty," while migrants rot in US camps. The "Pink Tide" now openly services Trump's neocolonial blitzkrieg across the region.

An explosive series of mass protests and general strikes in Colombia against austerity, inequality and repression were channeled by the pseudo-left and the trade union bureaucracy behind the election of Petro in 2022. The political disaster this has wrought is plain to see and now it is high time to draw fundamental political lessons from the experience of the "Pink Tide."

The Latin American working class cannot fight extreme inequality and defend its democratic rights—above all against imperialist oppression—through politicians like Petro or any other capitalist party. Only the independent mobilization of the working class for power can achieve this as part of the world socialist revolution.



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