

# Trump's "Shield of the Americas" summit prepares escalation of imperialist violence in Latin America

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On Saturday, a dozen of the most reactionary and corrupt political leaders of Latin America gathered with US President Donald Trump for an infamous regional summit dubbed the "Shield of the Americas." Held against the backdrop of Washington's criminal war of annihilation against Iran, the event reaffirmed US imperialism's aim of establishing its direct neocolonial domination of Latin America through the use of unrestrained violence and promotion of dictatorial regimes aligned to its geopolitical strategy.

The meeting, convened at Trump's south Florida golf club, was attended by the presidents of Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, and Trinidad and Tobago. The leaders of Mexico, Brazil and Colombia, which together account for more than 60 percent of both the region's GDP and its population, were deliberately excluded by Washington, along with other regional governments considered as "left-wing."

The summit was called by Trump, in his own words, to establish a "brand new military coalition to eradicate the criminal cartels plaguing our region." He branded it as the "Americas Counter Cartel Coalition."

The fraudulent rhetoric of fighting "drug cartels" has been utilized by the Trump administration as a cynical pretext for an escalating wave of aggression and political intervention across the region. "Narcoterrorism" was the enemy fabricated to justify the launching of the ongoing campaign of missile murders of fishermen in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific, as well as the invasion of Venezuela and kidnapping of its president on January 3. In recent weeks, the US military has promoted a new series of "boots on the ground" operations in Mexico, Colombia and Ecuador on the pretext of extending a war on "narcoterrorism" throughout the region.

The whole framework and statements at the "Shield of the Americas" summit laid bare how these multiple fronts of imperialist violence in Latin America, as well as the war on Iran, are interconnected parts of the same ruthless strategy for global domination and, more specifically, of the US build-up for war against China.

Significantly, Trump's address to his Latin American stooges was opened with a boastful report about the barbaric destruction of Iran. "It's been amazing, we've knocked out 42 navy ships, some

of them very large, in three days," Trump obscenely declared.

The would-be American Führer then moved to the subject of fighting "narcoterrorism" in Latin America, saying: "We'll use missiles. You want us to use a missile? They're extremely accurate. 'Piu,' right into the living room. That's the end of that cartel person."

Given the slaughter in Iran, he might have more accurately stated, "'Piu,' right into the classroom. That's the end of 160 school girls."

Trump continued:

Every leader here today is united in the conviction that we cannot and will not tolerate the lawlessness in our hemisphere any longer. The only way to defeat these enemies is by unleashing the power of our militaries. We have to use our military. You have to use your military. You can't fight these people with—and you have great police, you have some great police, but they threaten your police. They scare your police. You've got to use your military.

Pointing to what is currently the main stage in Washington's continuing campaign of "regime change" in Latin America, Trump proclaimed: "As we achieve a historic transformation in Venezuela, we're also looking forward to the great change that will soon be coming to Cuba."

The same goals of societal annihilation that Washington is pursuing in Iran through carpet bombing are being prosecuted against the island of Cuba, located barely 100 miles from where Trump was speaking, through the imposition of a blockade against all energy shipments. The deliberate provocation of mass hunger, disease, and social collapse was openly celebrated by the fascist US president. "Cuba's at the end of the line," Trump stated. "They're very much at the end of the line. They have no money. They have no oil. They have a bad philosophy. They have a bad regime that's been bad for a long time."

Like a mafia gangster, Trump cynically stated, pointing to the Latin American political stooges in his audience: "I was surprised, but four of you said: 'Could you do us a favor and take care of

Cuba?’ I will take care of that, alright.” While his administration’s “focus right now is on Iran,” he said that US Secretary of State Marco Rubio could “take an hour off” to “wrap up a deal on Cuba. That’ll be an easy one.”

Significantly, while he boasted of starving Cuba of its oil imports from Venezuela, Trump highly praised the Venezuelan “interim” President Delcy Rodriguez. “She’s doing an excellent job partnering with us,” the US president said. The Chavista leader, speaking as a colonial adjunct, returned the compliment hours after the summit. “We reaffirm our commitment to developing enduring relations grounded in mutual respect, equality, and adherence to international law,” Rodriguez wrote, as the kidnapped Maduro sits in a US prison cell.

While praising Rodriguez, Trump directly targeted Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum in his speech. He claimed that “the cartels rule Mexico” and that the country “is the epicenter of cartel violence,” arguments launched against Venezuela before its invasion. Trump specifically recalled Sheinbaum’s refusal to “let me eradicate the cartels,” that is, to deploy US troops and bomb Mexico.

Sheinbaum’s administration has consistently responded to Trump’s pressure with adaptation, seeking to prevent a unilateral US military operation in the country by directing the Mexican state itself to promote a war on “drug cartels” and, in fact, furthering the repression against the working class. In February, her administration promoted a US-backed operation to kill the head of the CJNG (Jalisco New Generation Cartel), resulting in a wave of violence against the civilian population. Continuing the spineless accommodation to US imperialism, Sheinbaum dismissed Trump’s latest remarks as insignificant.

The same catastrophic path is being trod by the other representatives of the bankrupt “Pink Tide” governments in Latin America.

Colombia’s President Gustavo Petro, who had previously declared that any US military action against Venezuela would be treated as “an aggression against Latin America,” moderated his position after meeting Trump at the White House in early February 2026. On March 1, 2026, Petro’s administration announced joint operations with Ecuador and the United States, deploying 20,000 troops to fight drug trafficking.

The same is true in relation to Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. Lula has been systematically pursuing a bilateral meeting with Trump, which was set to take place in Washington at the time of “Shield of the Americas” summit, to which he was not invited. In exchange for Trump’s good graces, Lula offers to establish a US-Brazilian partnership to fight crime in his country.

Saturday’s meeting culminated in the signature of a Joint Security Declaration ideologically based on the “Trump corollary” to the Monroe Doctrine, which claims the right to assert US domination over the Western Hemisphere and all its resources and to counter China’s regional influence. The signatories declared their intent to cooperate with Washington to “enhance security in the Western Hemisphere,” and on “efforts regarding border security, countering narcoterrorism,” as well as “securing critical infrastructure”—a euphemism for countering the influence of China. The Orwellian phrase, “Advance ‘Peace through

Strength,’” was adopted as the “Shield’s” motto.

The militarization of Latin America proclaimed at the “Shield of the Americas” meeting has the deepest historical and political implications.

Trump’s call for the systematic employment of the military in regional internal repression is a blueprint for restoring the US-backed military dictatorships that unleashed a reign of political terror and mass torture and murder of Latin American workers and youth.

The criminal gang that posed alongside the US mafia boss for a family photo in Miami was composed of direct political heirs of these historical crimes. Prominent among them were Argentina’s fascist President Javier Milei and Chile’s president-elect José Antonio Kast, who came to be briefed in Washington four days before his inauguration. Kast, the son of a Nazi officer who escaped to Chile, is himself a vocal admirer of the murderous dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet that ruled his country from 1973-1990.

The event hosted by Trump Saturday is directly reminiscent of another regional summit that took place 50 years ago, on November 25, 1975, in the Chilean capital, under Pinochet’s rule. Dubbed the “First Inter American Meeting on National Intelligence,” the meeting gathered fascistic military officials from Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay to establish the infamous “Operation Condor,” an integrated network of murderous political repression and coup plotting across the region.

A significant difference in relation to Trump’s summit is that Pinochet’s meeting in 1975 was held in secret, and the formal establishment of “Operation Condor” only came to public attention with the opening of the “Terror Archives” of Paraguay in 1992. Even more concealed was the participation of the United States in these crimes through the CIA’s provision of logistical backing to political coups and training and infrastructure for the murderous agencies of repression throughout Latin America.

The days in which US imperialism could maintain the image of leader of the “free world” are long gone. Washington’s unconcealed promotion of state murder and dictatorship has, however, explosive implications which are far beyond its control.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* has insisted, the violent outburst of US imperialism is not a sign of strength but of deep historical crisis. Its criminal interventions and disruption of bourgeois rule throughout the world are coupled with extreme political crisis within the United States itself. The contradictions of the imperialist system are leading to the greatest eruption of class struggle in history, in which the social struggles of workers in South, Central and North America will assume the form of an inseparable revolutionary process of a socialist character.



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