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“THE DONROE DOCTRINE”: TRANSFORMATION OF THE US SECURITY POLICY TOWARDS LATIN AMERICA DURING DONALD TRUMP’S SECOND TERM

Ivan Fechko

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This article examines the transformation of the US security policy towards Latin America and the Caribbean during Donald Trump’s second presidency, through the concept of the “Donroe Doctrine.” It argues that the administration has combined the traditional logic of the Monroe Doctrine with the principles of America First, strategic competition, and the securitisation of transnational threats. The article analyses the use of economic coercion, military and intelligence instruments, and selective security partnerships. It concludes that this approach reflects a broader return of the Western Hemisphere to US strategic priorities and regional security.

Donald Trump’s return to the White House in January 2025 marked a notable transformation in US policy towards Latin America and the Caribbean. Issues that had previously been largely treated as separate areas of regional policy (drug trafficking, transnational organised crime, illegal migration, and political instability) became increasingly integrated into a broader understanding of US national security and strategic competition in the Western Hemisphere. At the same time, the Trump administration increased its attention on the presence of extra-regional powers, primarily China, Russia, and Iran, combining the need to counter their influence with the aim of restoring American primacy in the

region. This shift was accompanied by a more active use of economic coercion, and military and intelligence instruments, as well as an expansion of security cooperation with politically aligned states in the region.

In this article, this set of interrelated approaches is examined through the concept of the “Donroe Doctrine,”¹ which serves as an analytical designation for the contemporary reinterpretation of the traditional logic of the Monroe Doctrine during Donald Trump’s second presidency, and in light of the America First foreign policy principle. The central argument is that this represents not simply a return to the historical Monroe Doctrine, but its adaptation to a new security

¹ The term “Donroe Doctrine,” formed by combining the name Donald and the surname Monroe, gained public currency in early January 2025, particularly after the headline “The Donroe Doctrine: Trump’s Vision for the Hemisphere” appeared on the front page of the New York Post on January 8. The term subsequently became widely used in journalistic and analytical discourse to characterise the approach of Donald Trump’s second administration towards the Western Hemisphere.

environment in which the traditional aim of limiting the influence of extra-regional powers is combined with the securitisation of transnational threats, and a willingness to employ a broader range of instruments of American power. The aim of the article is to identify the key characteristics of the transformation of the US security policy towards Latin America, and to analyse its practical implementation within the framework of the "Donroe Doctrine."

From the Monroe Doctrine to the "Donroe Doctrine"

The US foreign policy principle known as the Monroe Doctrine was formulated in 1823 by President James Monroe, against the background of the independence gained by the former Spanish colonies in Latin America and concerns about the possible restoration of European control over them. It was based on the broader logic of strategic denial – the aim of preventing the military, political, or strategic presence of external powers in the Western Hemisphere. At the time of its proclamation, the doctrine was largely declaratory due to the limited capabilities of the United States, but as American power grew, it gradually developed into one of the key principles of Washington's policy in the region.

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the meaning of the Monroe Doctrine gradually expanded along with the growing capabilities and ambitions of the United States. From its initial focus on preventing European intervention, it increasingly evolved into a US claim to a

special role in maintaining regional order². The culmination of this transformation was the Roosevelt Corollary of 1904, which justified the right of the United States to intervene in the affairs of Latin American states in cases of chronic instability or the threat of external intervention. Thus, the Western Hemisphere was increasingly viewed as a space of special US security interests and privileged influence.

During the Cold War, this logic was adapted to deal with the confrontation with the Soviet Union (the so-called "Kennan Corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine).³ The main challenge became preventing the spread of communist influence and Soviet military presence, which was particularly evident in US policy towards Cuba, and during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, and later in support for anti-communist forces within the framework of the so-called "Reagan Corollary."⁴ Despite changes in the historical context, a common element of the different interpretations of the Monroe Doctrine remained Washington's aim of preventing the emergence in the Western Hemisphere of an external power capable of limiting US strategic freedom of action.

After the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of the Soviet threat, the importance of the Monroe Doctrine declined, while US strategic attention, especially after 11 September 2001, shifted towards other regions of the world. Against this background, China's presence in Latin America gradually increased, making it one of the key economic partners of many states in the region, while Russia maintained

2 G.B. Young, *Intervention Under the Monroe Doctrine: The Olney Corollary*, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 57, No. 2, June 1942, pp. 247–280, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2143553>

3 L. Bethell, *The Monroe Doctrine in US-Latin American Relations: And the 2025 Trump Corollary*, *CEBRI-Journal*, Year 4, No. 16, October–December 2025, <https://cebri.org/revista/en/artigo/241/the-monroe-doctrine-in-us-latin-american-relations>

4 L. Bethell, *The Monroe Doctrine in US-Latin American Relations: And the 2025 Trump Corollary*, *CEBRI-Journal*, Year 4, No. 16, October–December 2025, <https://cebri.org/revista/en/artigo/241/the-monroe-doctrine-in-us-latin-american-relations>

certain political and security positions and Iran expanded its contacts with several governments. This gradually brought Latin America back into the context of global strategic competition.

During the 2020s, the presence of extra-regional powers became increasingly closely linked in US security discourse with transnational crime, drug trafficking, and illegal migration. Under Donald Trump's second administration, these two dimensions were effectively integrated into a single vision of security in the Western Hemisphere. It is precisely the combination of the traditional logic of preventing the dominance of external powers with new transnational threats and strategic competition that provides the conceptual foundation for the contemporary reinterpretation of the Monroe Doctrine in the form of the so-called "Donroe Doctrine."

Although Trump and his first administration had made reference to the Monroe Doctrine before, it was after his return to the White House in 2025 that this approach began to acquire a more coherent political and strategic form. The institutional consolidation came in November 2025, with the adoption of the new US National Security Strategy, which explicitly declared the intention to "assert and enforce a 'Trump Corollary' to the Monroe Doctrine." Among the key US interests in the Western Hemisphere, the document identified regional stability, limiting illegal migration, combating cartels and transnational crime, preventing extra-regional competitors from controlling strategic assets, and preserving US access to key geographic locations. The Strategy also envisaged strengthening the American military presence in the region and the possibility of using lethal force against cartels⁵. Thus, it provided a coherent conceptual framework for an approach that,

during the first months of Trump's second presidency, had manifested itself primarily through individual policy decisions.

The name "Donroe Doctrine" can therefore be used to describe Donald Trump's second administration's approach to the Western Hemisphere, combining the traditional logic of the Monroe Doctrine with the principles of America First and the contemporary understanding of threats to US national security. It is not a separately and officially proclaimed doctrine, but rather a set of interrelated strategic approaches: returning the Western Hemisphere to US security priorities; seeking to preserve American primacy and limit the presence of China, Russia, and Iran; the securitisation of drug trafficking, transnational crime, and illegal migration; and a more active use of military, economic, and political instruments.



It is precisely the combination of the traditional logic of preventing the dominance of external powers with new transnational threats and strategic competition that provides the conceptual foundation for the contemporary reinterpretation of the Monroe Doctrine in the form of the so-called "Donroe Doctrine"

A manifestation of this logic has been pressure on states in the region to limit the Chinese presence in strategic infrastructure. This was evident, in particular, in Washington's position regarding the activities of Chinese companies around the Panama Canal, and the submarine cable project between Chile and Hong Kong, demonstrating the Trump administration's intention to constrain China's entrenchment in critical transport and digital infrastructure.

5 The White House, National Security Strategy of the United States of America, November 2025.

The “Donroe Doctrine” in Practice

Venezuela: From Pressure to Direct Coercion. One of the clearest examples of the practical application of the “Donroe Doctrine” was provided by Venezuela, which became the principal testing ground for the Trump administration’s shift from political and economic pressure towards the use of intelligence and the military. The Chavista regime had remained a traditional opponent of Washington for more than a quarter of a century, but after Trump’s return to the White House, relations entered a new stage of a sharp escalation in hostility.

An important precondition for this escalation was the Trump administration’s broader interpretation of the term terrorism. In February 2025, the State Department designated eight drug cartels and transnational criminal groups as foreign terrorist organisations, including Venezuela’s Tren de Aragua. In November, the Cartel de los Soles, which Washington linked to senior officials, military figures, and President Maduro himself, was also added to the list. These designations reinforced the shift from treating the Venezuelan regime solely as an authoritarian government to presenting it as part of a broader narco-terrorist threat⁶.

At the same time, the United States increased its military presence in the Caribbean Sea and began strikes against vessels linked to drug trafficking. The first publicly confirmed strike took place on 2 September 2025; by

the end of the year, the administration had authorised more than 30 strikes against at least 36 vessels, resulting in the deaths of at least 115 people⁷. These operations prompted significant criticism from human rights organisations and international law experts, who questioned the legal basis for the use of lethal military force. Human Rights Watch characterised them as extrajudicial killings⁸.

Meanwhile, Washington intensified economic pressure on Caracas. In March 2025, Donald Trump issued an executive order imposing a 25 per cent tariff on imports of goods from countries purchasing Venezuelan oil and gas⁹. This instrument represented a form of secondary economic pressure: the administration sought to impact not only Venezuela but also its main trading partners. In December of the same year, a maritime interdiction campaign against tankers carrying sanctioned Venezuelan oil began, during which at least ten vessels were intercepted.

Economic and military pressure was complemented by intelligence and political instruments. In October 2025, Trump confirmed authorisation for the CIA to conduct covert operations in Venezuela, while the reward for information that could lead to Maduro’s arrest was increased to USD 50 million. At the same time, Washington maintained a negotiating channel through Special Envoy Richard Grenell, although by the autumn of 2025, this had lost priority amid further military escalation.

6 B. Klein, N. Bertrand, K. Liptak, Trump Administration Formally Designates Venezuela’s Maduro as Member of a Foreign Terrorist Organization, CNN, 24.11.2025, <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/11/24/politics/venezuela-terrorist-designation-maduro>

7 International Enforcement Law Reporter, Vol. 42, Issue 2, February 2026, <https://www.grossmanyong.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/IELR-Vol.-42-Issue-2.pdf>

8 Human Rights Watch, US: Maritime Strikes Amount to Extrajudicial Killings, 18.09.2025, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/09/18/us-maritime-strikes-amount-to-extrajudicial-killings>

9 The White House, Imposing Tariffs on Countries Importing Venezuelan Oil, Executive Order, 24.03.2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/imposing-tariffs-on-countries-importing-venezuelan-oil/>

By the end of 2025, the United States had deployed its largest military force in the Caribbean in decades, including the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford, other warships, aircraft, and approximately 15,000 military personnel and civilian staff. The scale of the deployment significantly exceeded the requirements of a traditional maritime drug-interdiction operation, and provided the capability for a broader military campaign.

The culmination came on 3 January 2026, when US forces conducted an operation in Caracas that resulted in the detention of Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, who were subsequently transferred to the United States for prosecution. The operation was carried out without prior separate congressional authorisation for the use of military force, prompting debate over its compliance with US law and international law.

Despite Maduro's removal, the United States did not completely dismantle the Chavista system or transfer power to the opposition led by María Corina Machado. Instead, Washington began engaging with former Vice President Delcy Rodríguez, who became acting president. This decision allowed the main state institutions to remain in place, prevented an immediate administrative collapse, and ensured the country's governability, but at the same time postponed the question of a democratic transfer of power indefinitely.

Trump stated that the United States would effectively oversee the transition process in Venezuela until a "safe, proper, and judicious transfer of power could be ensured"¹⁰. He also emphasised the intention to involve American oil companies in rebuilding the country's energy sector. Thus, the Venezuelan campaign combined the declared goals of

stabilisation and political transition with clear US economic and resource interests. The prioritisation of stability, oil production, and cooperation with part of the former ruling elite over immediate democratisation indicates that resource and geopolitical control occupied a place no less important in Washington's policy than its officially declared support for democracy.



The prioritisation of stability, oil production, and cooperation with part of the former ruling elite over immediate democratisation indicates that resource and geopolitical control occupied a place no less important in Washington's policy than its officially declared support for democracy

Following Maduro's removal, the country entered a transitional period that increasingly displayed signs of authoritarian stabilisation under significant external influence. The Venezuelan authorities moved towards liberalising energy policy, expanding access for foreign companies, primarily American and other Western firms, to the oil sector, releasing some political prisoners, and limiting cooperation with certain US adversaries. At the same time, key representatives of the Chavista apparatus, including parts of the security structures, retained significant influence, raising questions about the speed and irreversibility of the democratic transition.

Thus, during the Venezuelan campaign, the Trump administration consistently employed instruments of coercion, a maximum-pressure strategy combining economic, diplomatic, informational,

¹⁰ BBC News, Trump Says US Will 'Run' Venezuela and 'Fix Oil Infrastructure', 04.01.2026, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cd9enjee3go>

intelligence, and military leverage. It included both the threat of force and its limited and subsequently direct use, in order to compel the Venezuelan leadership to make concessions and alter the state's political behaviour¹¹. Following Maduro's detention, the policy of coercion gradually transformed into a transactional model for managing the transition process. It was based on control over the sale of Venezuelan oil, directing export revenues towards the need for stabilisation, involving Western companies in rebuilding the energy sector, and cooperating with part of the former ruling elite.

***The Venezuelan case,
therefore, demonstrates the
most radical manifestation
of the “Donroe Doctrine”***

One of the principal architects of US policy towards Venezuela was Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who conceptualised the subsequent American approach as a three-stage process of stabilisation, economic recovery, and political transition.

The Venezuelan case, therefore, demonstrates the most radical manifestation of the “Donroe Doctrine.” It combined the securitisation of drug trafficking, the designation of an authoritarian regime as constituting a terrorist threat, secondary economic sanctions, a naval blockade, covert intelligence operations, the direct use of force, and the subsequent management of the political transition. Whereas US policy towards Venezuela had previously been based primarily on sanctions, diplomatic isolation, and support for the opposition, in 2025-2026, Washington moved towards

directly shaping the country's domestic political and economic order. It is precisely this transition from external pressure to direct coercion and controlled stabilisation that constitutes the main significance of the Venezuelan case for understanding the practical dimension of the “Donroe Doctrine.”

Operation Southern Spear: Militarising Regional Security. The Venezuelan campaign was part of a broader operational framework for combating narco-terrorist organisations in the Western Hemisphere — Operation Southern Spear, whose launch was announced by US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth on November 13, 2025. The operation was placed under the command of US Southern Command, while the forces involved were capable of conducting maritime, air, and limited ground operations, going beyond traditional maritime drug interdiction efforts.

The launch of Southern Spear consolidated the blurring of the line between law enforcement and military approaches to combating transnational crime: after cartels were designated as terrorist organisations, actions against them were increasingly treated as part of a military campaign involving the use of lethal force. In this sense, the operation became one of the key military instruments of the “Donroe Doctrine,” creating a basis for broader US power projection in the region. While in Venezuela this took the form of direct coercion, in Ecuador it was implemented through a stronger military partnership and joint operations.

On 3 March 2026, the armed forces of Ecuador and the United States launched joint military operations against organisations that Washington classifies as terrorist

11 M. Elieson, Venezuela: A Study in Coercion, Small Wars Journal, 08.07.2026, <https://smallwarsjournal.com/2026/07/08/venezuela-a-study-in-coercion/>

organisations. The campaign launch was announced simultaneously by the Ecuadorian government and the US Southern Command. The deepening of cooperation took place against the background of a sharp increase in criminal violence in Ecuador, which, located between two leading cocaine-producing countries (Colombia and Peru), had become one of the key transit hubs for drug trafficking to the United States and Europe. An additional political and legal basis for expanding US involvement was the designation of the influential Ecuadorian groups Los Choneros and Los Lobos as foreign terrorist organisations.

The US military presence in Ecuador was implemented primarily through a partnership model: intelligence sharing, technological support, training of forces, and coordination of joint operations. At the same time, US participation in planning and supporting strike operations indicated a gradual blurring of the line between traditional counternarcotics cooperation and the use of military instruments. In this sense, Ecuador became a representative example of the logic of Operation Southern Spear, in which US military capabilities were used not only for direct coercion but also to build a network of regional security partnerships.

Shield of the Americas: A Coalition of Partners. The next step was an attempt to institutionalise the new security model at the regional level. On 5 March 2026, the first Americas Counter Cartel Conference was held at SOUTHCOM headquarters in Doral, Florida, bringing together representatives of defence and security agencies from 17 states of the Western Hemisphere. The conference resulted in the signing of a joint declaration on strengthening regional cooperation in

combating cartels and designated terrorist organisations. Two days later, on 7 March, Donald Trump held the Shield of the Americas summit in Miami with the participation of leaders from 12 Latin American and Caribbean states, during which the Doral Charter of Liberty was signed. The Trump administration presented this format as a coalition of states prepared for closer coordination in combating transnational crime, drug trafficking, illegal migration, and other threats to regional security. Overall, the participation of the country's leaders was to some extent a demonstration of loyalty, although the summit resulted in few concrete practical agreements¹².



Ecuador became a representative example of the logic of Operation Southern Spear, in which US military capabilities were used not only for direct coercion but also to build a network of regional security partnerships

In the context of the "Donroe Doctrine," Shield of the Americas can be viewed as an attempt to transform the practice of selective bilateral partnerships and military cooperation into a broader political and security format. An important element of the summit was the emphasis on the militarisation of the fight against drug trafficking. Notably, the region's largest states (Brazil and Mexico), as well as Colombia, did not participate in the summit, while the participants were predominantly governments more politically aligned with Washington, including Argentina, Ecuador, El Salvador, and Paraguay. Thus, the new architecture is taking shape not as a universal inter-American mechanism similar

12 C. Osborn, Trump's Summit Offers More Deference Than Details, Foreign Policy, 13.03.2026, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2026/03/13/trump-shield-americas-drug-cartel-military-far-right/>

to the OAS or the Summit of the Americas, but rather as a coalition of “willing” partners that share the US understanding of regional threats. This is both its main strength and its structural limitation: the narrower format allows Washington to coordinate actions with its allies more quickly, but the absence of Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia significantly limits the ability of the Shield of the Americas to claim a role as a hemisphere-wide security system.



In the context of the “Donroe Doctrine,” Shield of the Americas can be viewed as an attempt to transform the practice of selective bilateral partnerships and military cooperation into a broader political and security format

An important feature of the regional policy of Donald Trump’s second administration was the development of a more differentiated approach towards Latin American states, depending on the political orientation of their governments and their willingness to support Washington’s security priorities. Particularly illustrative in this context were relations with the governments of Gustavo Petro in Colombia and Claudia Sheinbaum in Mexico, towards which Washington combined practical security cooperation with harsh political rhetoric and periodic threats of unilateral action. The administration developed its closest relations primarily with right-wing and conservative governments that shared its approaches to combating organised crime, drug trafficking, and illegal migration, while relations with a number of left-wing governments were characterised by greater tensions and political disagreements.

The Shield of the Americas summit, attended predominantly by leaders ideologically close to Trump, became one of the clearest manifestations of this tendency. At the same time, the political divide was not absolute: cooperation with Mexico in combating cartels continued despite ideological disagreements, including the elimination of one of their leaders, Nemesio Ruben Oseguera Cervantes, known as “El Mencho”, in February 2026.

At the same time, the region was experiencing a growing electoral shift in favour of right-wing and conservative forces, partly driven by public demand for greater security and a tougher response to organised crime. Trump also increasingly openly demonstrated political preferences during election campaigns in the region, publicly supporting ideologically aligned candidates, while contacts between members of his administration and certain candidates were able to strengthen their political legitimacy and international visibility ahead of elections. In the context of the “Donroe Doctrine,” this indicates Washington’s intention of building a network of politically aligned partners, capable of supporting the US vision of regional order and security.

Cuba: Economic Coercion and Maximum Pressure. Another example of the practical implementation of the “Donroe Doctrine” was the Cuban case, in which Washington’s main instrument, unlike in Venezuela, was a strategy of “maximum pressure”, based primarily on economic and energy coercion. As early as June 2025, the Trump administration reinstated strict restrictions on tourist travel to Cuba, strengthened the enforcement of the long-standing embargo, and tightened restrictions on transactions with enterprises linked to the Cuban military¹³. However, a new step-up in pressure began after the January 2026

13 The White House, Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Strengthens the Policy of the United States Toward Cuba, 30.06.2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/06/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-strengthens-the-policy-of-the-united-states-toward-cuba/>

operation to detain Nicolás Maduro. The removal of the Venezuelan leader and Caracas's reorientation towards cooperation with Washington effectively deprived Havana of its main political ally and one of its key economic partners in the region. Particularly significant was the termination of Venezuelan oil supplies to Havana, on which Cuba had long been heavily dependent.

On 29 January 2026, Donald Trump signed Executive Order 14380, which declared the situation surrounding Cuba an "unusual and extraordinary threat" to US national security and foreign policy. The document established a mechanism for imposing additional tariffs on imports of goods from countries that directly or indirectly supply oil to Cuba. Thus, Washington moved from traditional bilateral sanctions to secondary pressure on third-party suppliers, using access to the US market as leverage to restrict Havana's energy resources. Under this pressure, Mexico, one of Cuba's main oil suppliers, suspended some shipments, although the Mexican authorities publicly emphasised the sovereign nature of such decisions.

At the same time, the executive order demonstrated a significant expansion of the US interpretation of the Cuban threat. The Trump administration linked Havana not only to its own domestic repression and its communist political system, but also to cooperation with regimes and actors hostile to the United States: Russia, China, Iran, Hamas, and Hezbollah¹⁴. In this sense, Washington increasingly viewed Cuba less as a kind of "relic of the Cold War" and more as a potential foothold for the political, intelligence, and strategic presence of extra-regional

US adversaries in the Caribbean. It is precisely this logic that directly places the Cuban case within the broader concept of the "Donroe Doctrine": the internal nature of the regime, its foreign policy ties, and its geographical proximity to the United States are combined into a single category constituting a national security threat.

Energy pressure sharply deepened the already systemic crisis in the Cuban economy. The island's energy infrastructure had remained outdated and insufficiently modernised for decades, but the reduction in external fuel supplies triggered a new wave of large-scale power outages. In July 2026, Cuba's national power grid completely collapsed three times within nine days. The fuel crisis was accompanied by shortages of goods, transportation problems, declining economic activity, and a further deterioration of the tourism sector. In terms of the scale of its economic difficulties, Cuba's situation has increasingly been compared to the "Special Period" of the 1990s following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Thus, restricting Cuba's access to external energy resources became one of the main instruments of US coercion. Washington seeks to maximise the economic costs of the island maintaining its existing political model, and to compel the Cuban leadership to make concessions, while leaving open different scenarios for the country's further transformation – from a negotiated process to increasing domestic political instability. At the same time, such a strategy carries significant humanitarian and political risks, as the consequences of the energy crisis directly affect the everyday lives of the Cuban population and may provoke a migration crisis in the region.

14 D.J. Trump, Executive Order 14380 – Addressing Threats to the United States by the Government of Cuba, The American Presidency Project, 29.01.2026, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/executive-order-14380-addressing-threats-the-united-states-the-government-cuba>

Political pressure was simultaneously reinforced by the administration's rhetoric. While after the fall of the Maduro regime, Trump initially argued that the Cuban system could "fall on its own," Washington's subsequent signals regarding the need for fundamental change in Havana became considerably tougher. The July 2026 State Department report reinforced this framing by presenting Cuba as an ideological and security adversary engaged in long-term influence operations¹⁵.



in the case of Cuba, the main pressure is exerted through restrictions on energy flows, secondary economic measures against third countries, and the constant raising of the political cost of maintaining the existing regime

Rubio, one of the main advocates of a hard-line approach, directly linked Cuba's economic crisis to the need for a fundamental transformation of its political system¹⁶. At the same time, despite the unprecedented pressure, contacts between the two sides did not cease entirely: the Cuban leadership demonstrated a willingness to negotiate, while also stating that it was unwilling to abandon the basic principles of its political system.

The Cuban case, therefore, demonstrates a different model of the practical application of the "Donroe Doctrine." While in Venezuela, US coercion ultimately took the form of direct military intervention, in the case of

Cuba, the main pressure is exerted through restrictions on energy flows, secondary economic measures against third countries, and the constant raising of the political cost of maintaining the existing regime. The scenario of direct use of force remains rather an option of last resort, while Washington's priority appears to be achieving Cuba's internal transformation through economic and political coercion. At the same time, the Venezuelan experience suggests that the Trump administration may also be prepared to cooperate with sections of the existing ruling elites, provided that they change their foreign policy orientation and comply with key US security demands.

Conclusion

The analysis demonstrates that during Donald Trump's second presidency, US policy in Latin America and the Caribbean has undergone a notable transformation towards a more security-oriented, coercive, and interventionist model. Its defining feature has become the integration of previously relatively separate challenges — drug trafficking, transnational organised crime, illegal migration, political instability, energy security, and the looming presence of China, Russia, and Iran — into a single vision of hemispheric security. In this context, the Western Hemisphere is increasingly viewed by Washington as a space of direct US national security interests, in which the preservation of American strategic primacy is linked both to countering internal transnational threats and to limiting the ability of extra-regional powers to establish themselves in terms of critical infrastructure, strategic sectors, and geographically important locations.

15 US Department of State, Cuba: The Capital of 21st Century Communism, Report, 20.07.2026, <https://www.state.gov/cuba-the-capital-of-21st-century-communism/>

16 D. Roy, Trump's 'Maximum Pressure' Campaign on Cuba, Explained, Council on Foreign Relations, 31.03.2026, <https://www.cfr.org/articles/trumps-maximum-pressure-campaign-on-cuba-explained>

It is in this sense that the “Donroe Doctrine” can be viewed as a contemporary reinterpretation of the Monroe Doctrine, but not as its literal reproduction. In terms of its interventionist logic, it is, in some respects, even closer to the Roosevelt Corollary of 1904 than to James Monroe’s original declaration of 1823: the emphasis shifts from primarily preventive efforts to exclude external intervention to justifying an active US role in shaping regional order. Whereas in the nineteenth century the main external threat was seen as the return of European powers to political and military control over the Americas, today the principal systemic competitor is China, alongside Russia and Iran. At the same time, cartels, transnational criminal networks, migration flows, and governments that Washington identifies as threatening, are becoming internal objects of securitisation.

The practical implementation of this logic has varied from direct military coercion in Venezuela and economic coercion against Cuba to the partnership model in Ecuador, and attempts at its broader institutionalisation through the Shield of the Americas.



Whereas in the nineteenth century the main external threat was seen as the return of European powers to political and military control over the Americas, today the principal systemic competitor is China, alongside Russia and Iran

At the same time, the effectiveness and long-term consequences of such a strategy remain uncertain. The strikes on vessels linked by the United States to drug trafficking, as well as the operation to detain Nicolás Maduro, became the



For inter-American relations, this may mean a shift from universal multilateral mechanisms towards a more selective system of partnerships built around states willing to support the US definition of regional threat

subject of intense debate regarding their compliance with international law and the permissible limits of unilateral use of force. This creates a paradox within the “Donroe Doctrine”: while seeking to restore American regional primacy and ensure a more effective response to transnational threats, Washington is simultaneously using instruments that may deepen distrust of the United States, strengthen anti-American sentiment, and encourage some Latin American states to pursue greater strategic autonomy. The limitations of the new approach are also evident in the fact that even governments politically close to the Trump administration are not prepared to fully abandon their economic ties with China. Therefore, Washington’s strategic objective appears to be less the complete displacement of extra-regional competitors’ trade and economic presence from the region than preventing their entrenchment in critical sectors and strategic locations.

For inter-American relations, this may mean a shift from universal multilateral mechanisms towards a more selective system of partnerships built around states willing to support the US definition of regional threat. Such a model may provide greater operational flexibility, but its legitimacy and sustainability are limited by the absence of the compliance of key regional states, primarily Brazil and Mexico. In the broader transatlantic context, weakening the positions of Russia and other US adversaries in the Western Hemisphere could potentially

reduce their ability to use the region as a space for strategic pressure on Washington and its allies. At the same time, the practice of unilateral military intervention creates complex legal and political precedents for an international order based on the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

For now, the question remains open as to whether the “Donroe Doctrine” is a specific manifestation of Donald Trump’s foreign policy style — a form of temporary Trumpism — or the beginning of a more lasting transformation of US strategy in the Western Hemisphere. Its current form is undoubtedly linked to Trump’s personality, his preference for transactional approaches, demonstrative use of force, and hard-line rhetoric. At the same time, the structural drivers of this course — the growing influence of China, the activities of Russia and Iran, transnational

crime, drug trafficking, and migration pressure — are likely to extend far beyond a single presidency. Therefore, even if the specific instruments change, the broader trend towards the renewed securitisation of the Western Hemisphere and its return to the ranks of priority areas of US strategic policy may prove considerably more durable than the Donald Trump administration itself.

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