



## TRUMP 2.0'S FOREIGN POLICY IN THE AMERICAS

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### Abstract

President Trump's second-term foreign policy in the Americas is driven by his America First ideology. He is aggressively pursuing immigration enforcement, embracing economic protectionism, flirting with territorial ambitions, taking a strong stance against transnational criminal organizations, drastically reducing foreign aid, de-emphasizing human rights and anti-corruption, and seeking to counter Chinese influence in the hemisphere. Through the first five months, countries in the hemisphere have had to adjust to a bolder and more controversial Trump than in his first term and are growing increasingly skeptical of the United States' continued reliability as an ally and leader in the hemisphere.

### Introduction

President Donald Trump's return to the White House in 2025 has ushered in a dramatically more aggressive and unilateral U.S. foreign policy toward the world, including the Americas. Grounded in his signature "America First" ideology, Trump's second-term agenda has quickly upended former President Biden's strategy of broad engagement and multilateralism in addressing shared regional challenges, such as managing migration, advancing economic development, climate change, and democracy.

This paper analyzes the key elements of Trump's foreign policy in the Americas during his first five months in office and highlights how his administration's policies are straining historic alliances and accelerating geopolitical competition—

particularly with China—across the hemisphere.

### Campaign

Donald Trump's public comments during his 2024 presidential campaign and before he took office in January 2025 signaled a more assertive and unilateral approach to U.S. foreign policy in the Americas.

On the campaign trail, Trump emphasized that if elected, he would pursue aggressive immigration enforcement. He pledged to execute a massive deportation campaign, targeting millions of undocumented immigrants, many from Latin America and the Caribbean. He also promised to bring back many of his controversial border and asylum policies from his first administration, such as "Remain in Mexico" and safe third country agreements, and to reverse policies implemented by former President Biden to expand legal pathways, such as parole

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and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designations, that benefitted hundreds of thousands of nationals from the hemisphere.

To reduce the illicit flow of drugs entering the United States, he proposed designating Mexican drug cartels as foreign terrorist organizations and deploying the U.S. military to combat them.

Trump also advocated for imposing tariffs on countries he accused of undermining U.S. interests. He threatened a 10% tariff on all imports and said he would target countries involved in initiatives to circumvent the U.S. dollar, such as Brazil.

Trump's platform included a 90-day freeze on U.S. foreign assistance to allow his administration to assess programs that promoted ideas contrary to U.S. interests. He also expressed intentions to deprioritize support for multilateral development banks in favor of bilateral deals with countries deemed "friendly" to the United States.

Before taking office, Trump began referring to then-Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as "governor" and Canada as the country's "51<sup>st</sup> state." He declared that he planned to use "economic force" to take over Canada.

### Personnel

Trump's early selections for U.S. national security personnel leaders included several individuals with significant expertise in the Americas, both in the White House and the Department of State. However, five months into office, he has failed to nominate personnel for key positions and,

in one case, named someone to an important White House position overseeing the region with little policy experience in the hemisphere.

Within the White House, Trump named Mike Walz as his first National Security Advisor. As a Representative in the House of Representatives, he was critical of Cuba and Venezuela and introduced legislation that would authorize the U.S. military to fight the Mexican drug cartels. After less than four months in the job, Trump said he would nominate Walz for a different position. Trump has not yet named a permanent replacement. It took until June for Trump to tap Michael Jensen as the National Security Council Senior Director for the Western Hemisphere, an important position that involves briefing the President on key issues in the hemisphere and coordinating the work of U.S. departments and agencies. Jensen, however, is a career special forces operative with limited policy experience or knowledge of the region.

Within the Department of State, Trump named Marco Rubio, a Cuban American senator, as U.S. Secretary of State. He is the first Latino Secretary of State and the highest-ranking Latino official in U.S. history. As a congressman, he was an outspoken critic of the governments of Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela and sought to push back against China's growing influence. The Deputy Secretary of State, Chris Landau, is fluent in Spanish and served as U.S. Ambassador to Mexico in the first Trump Administration.

Mauricio Claver-Carone, also of Cuban descent, was appointed as the Department



of State Special Envoy for Latin America. During the first term of the Trump administration, he served as the NSC Senior Director for the Western Hemisphere. Trump later nominated him to serve as the President of the Inter-American Development Bank. Claver-Carone served for four months of Trump's second term before returning to the private sector.

Trump has still not nominated a Department of State Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, nor has he nominated individuals to serve as ambassadors for important countries in the region, such as Brazil, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.

### Opening Days

Starting January 20, Trump announced numerous policy directives and executive actions that reshaped traditional alliances, challenged long-standing international norms, and prioritized immediate domestic U.S. concerns, particularly immigration and trade.

In his first two weeks, Trump signed executive orders (EOs) that instituted a 90-day pause on U.S. foreign assistance, initiated the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement, suspended refugee admissions, eliminated Biden's migration strategies in the Western Hemisphere, and reinstated Cuba as a state sponsor of terrorism. He also signed an EO that imposed a 25% tariff on all goods entering the United States from Mexico and Canada (except for Canadian oil and energy exports, which received a 10% tariff).

### High-Level Engagement

President Trump and many of his senior advisors have made a number of visits to the hemisphere in the early months of his second term to advance U.S. immigration, economic, security, and China interests in the region.

Trump briefly visited Canada to attend the G7 Summit in mid-June. He met with Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney and announced a goal of reaching a bilateral trade deal soon. Trump had also planned to meet with Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, but he left the summit early to return to Washington to attend to the emerging Israel-Iran conflict.

In early February, Secretary of State Rubio visited Panama, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic. This was the first time in over a century that a Secretary of State's inaugural trip was to Latin America. In late March, Rubio traveled to the region again, this time visiting the Caribbean countries of Jamaica, Guyana, and Suriname.

Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem traveled to Colombia, El Salvador, and Mexico in March and Guatemala and Honduras in late June.

Other high-profile visits included U.S. Special Envoy for Special Missions Rick Grenell's travel to Venezuela in January, U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth's trip to Panama in April, and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent's and Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s visits to Argentina (April and May, respectively).



The administration has shown significant interest in the region. However, its engagement thus far reflects a preference for pursuing bilateral agreements with countries willing to make concessions on Trump's priorities, such as immigration, trade, and China, as well as boosting ideologically aligned leaders, including Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele and Argentine President Javier Milei.

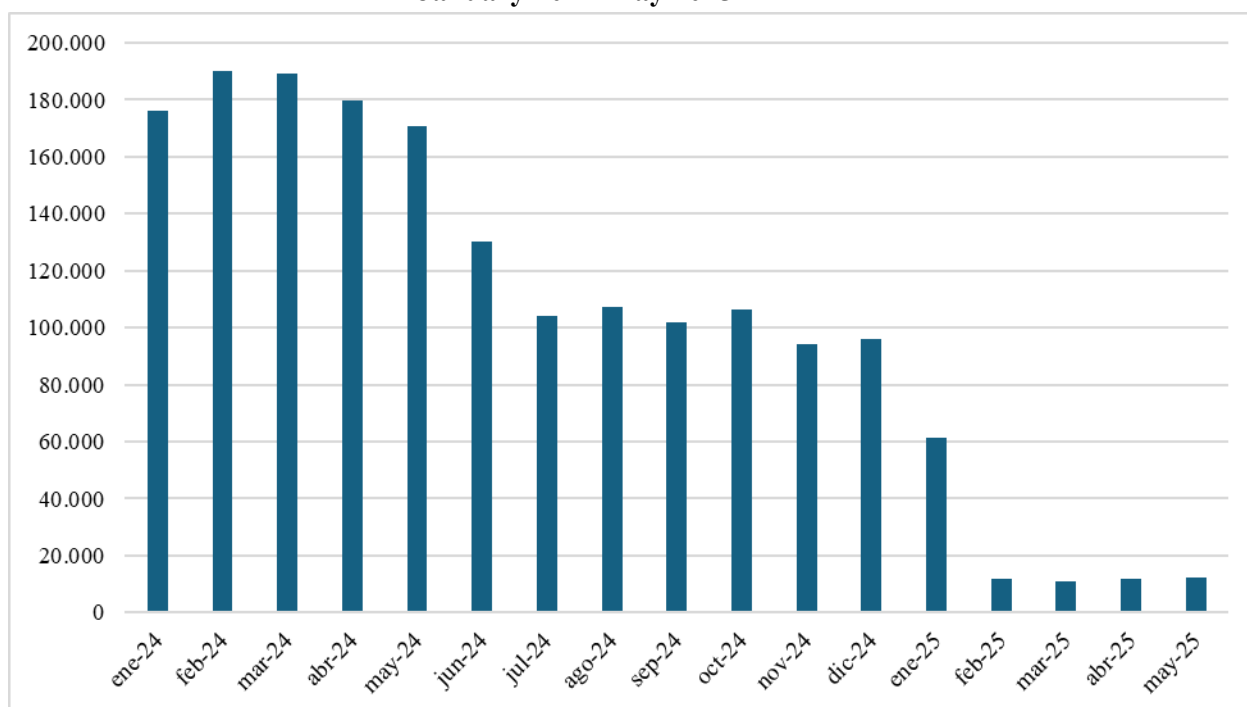
### Immigration

Immigration, not surprisingly, has been one of the administration's top priorities. Trump has abandoned Biden's approach of promoting hemispheric migration cooperation, investing in the root causes of migration, and expanding access to legal migration channels. Instead, he has ushered in one of the most significant changes to immigration policy in many years by pursuing policies that seek to deter illegal

immigration and reduce legal immigration, increase arrests, detentions, and deportations, and make life so difficult for immigrants residing in the United States that they choose return to their home countries voluntarily.

Arrests at the U.S.-Mexico border plummeted in the final months of the Biden administration and have continued to drop since Trump took office. There has been a 90% drop in monthly arrests over the past 12 months (June 2024 to May 2025). Despite the historically low level of arrivals, he has claimed there is "an invasion" of immigrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border to justify several actions, including the deployment of 10,000 troops at the border and effectively barring access to asylum.

**FIGURE 1. U.S. Immigrant Apprehensions at the U.S.-Mexico Border, January 2024-May 2025**



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Protection data.



Trump has been eager to push the limits of the law to pursue his immigration agenda, relying on novel and archaic laws to force confrontations with the courts. For example, many federal courts have been skeptical of the administration's reliance on the 1798 Alien Enemies Act to deport immigrants to El Salvador without providing them with an opportunity to challenge their removal. He has also invoked four national emergency declarations related to immigration and security at the U.S.-Mexico border, enabling him to deploy wide-ranging executive powers. He has invoked these emergency powers more than any other modern president at this point in his term.

The Trump administration is also reversing Biden's efforts to expand legal access to the United States for certain nationals to reduce the pressure on the U.S.-Mexico border. As a result, an estimated 1.6 million legal immigrants from the Americas will lose their work authorization and legal status. This includes 1.1 million Haitians and Venezuelans, who had been covered by Biden's TPS designations, and more than 530,000 Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans who had been paroled into the country under Biden's policies. Trump has also suspended access for refugees from the hemisphere from being resettled in the United States. Biden dramatically expanded refugee resettlement for at-risk individuals in the Americas, increasing admissions from 950 in fiscal year (FY) 2020 to over 25,000 in FY 2024, the highest levels in the history of the U.S. refugee resettlement program.

In June, Trump revived and updated his first administration's travel ban. This time, nationals from 19 countries would face a complete or partial travel ban, including three from the Americas: Cuba, Haiti, and Venezuela. Trump cited national security concerns, inadequate vetting procedures, and high visa overstay rates to justify the ban. In FY 2023, the United States granted more than 80,000 Cubans, Haitians, and Venezuelans temporary or permanent visas.

Trump has secured assistance from countries in the hemisphere to support his immigration agenda. Costa Rica and Panama agreed for the first time to receive Asian and African deportees from the United States. And Mexico reported that it had accepted the return of approximately 5,500 non-Mexican nationals from the United States for "humanitarian reasons" during the first three months of the Trump administration.

To ensure he receives the support he needs, Trump has threatened countries that do not comply with his requests. In late January, Trump suspended visas and threatened tariffs after Colombian President Gustavo Petro denied the U.S. government's attempt to deport Colombian nationals on a military jet. Trump's swift and disproportionate reaction was likely intended to send a message early into Trump's second term: there will be serious consequences if others rebuff Trump's requests.

Some leaders have been rewarded for their support. Salvadoran President Bukele offered to detain convicted criminals from the United States in the coun-



try's Terrorism Confinement Center. The United States liked the idea and agreed to pay El Salvador to detain Venezuelan and Salvadoran nationals, including alleged gang members of MS-13 and Tren de Aragua. This cooperation solidified Trump's support for Bukele and earned him an Oval Office meeting with Trump in April.

### Trade

U.S. economic policy towards the Americas in the first five months of Trump's second term can be characterized by protectionism and the strategic deployment of trade measures to extract concessions on other policy issues, such as migration control and counternarcotics cooperation.

One of Trump's notable achievements in his first term was the negotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement, which was replaced by the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). However, President Trump surprised many by announcing in January that, notwithstanding the USMCA, he would implement 25% tariffs on Mexican and Canadian exports to the United States if they did not take additional steps to curb illegal immigration and drug trafficking to the United States. Following discussions between Trump and Sheinbaum, the United States agreed to delay these tariffs for a month in exchange for Mexico deploying 10,000 National Guard troops to its northern border. Similarly, tariffs targeting Canadian imports were paused for 30 days after Canada announced anti-drug and border measures. The negotiation with Mexico and Canada served as a lesson to the world that Trump would im-

pose tariffs on friends and allies, had a moving list of demands, and is willing to change the terms to claim victory.

In March, Trump imposed 25% tariffs on imported steel and aluminum products. Three months later, he increased the tariffs to 50%. These tariffs are expected to have a significant impact on imports from countries in the hemisphere, particularly Argentina, Brazil, Canada, and Mexico, which are important producers and exporters of these materials.

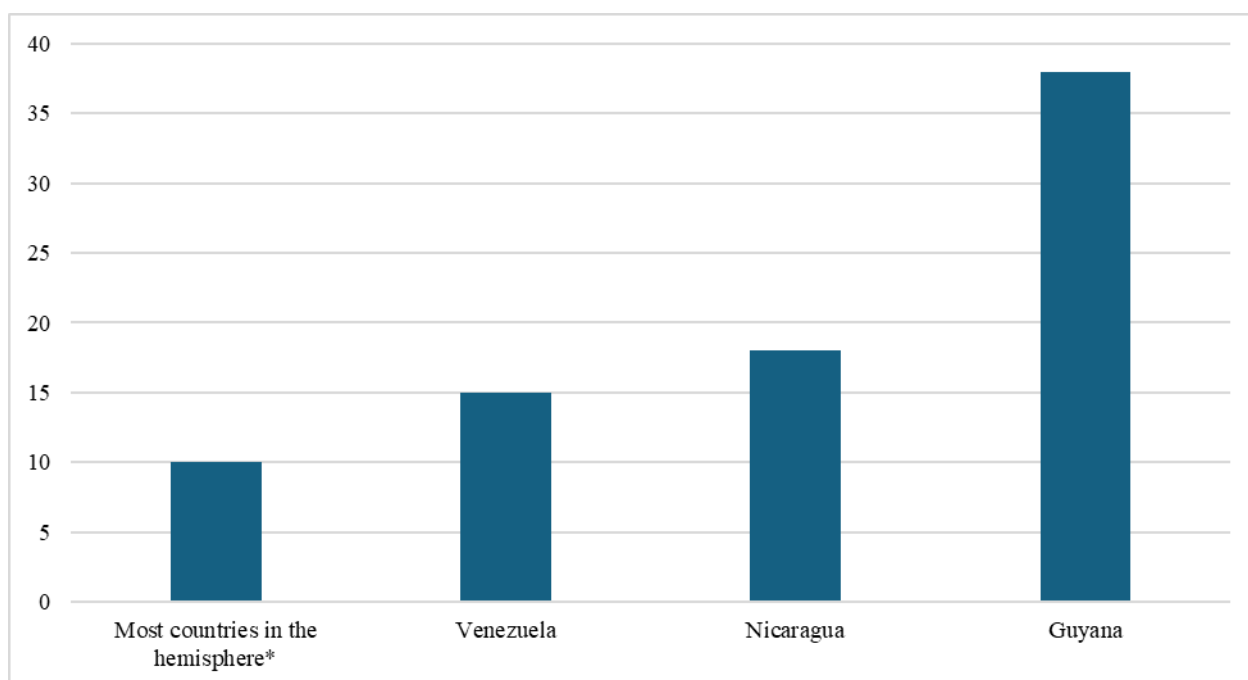
In March, Trump announced that the United States would impose a 25% tariff on cars and car parts imported into the country. In April, bowing to industry pressure, Trump eased some of the tariff measures, including exempting cars made with over 85% of USMCA-compliant parts.

In April, Trump announced global reciprocal tariffs, calculating the tariffs based on the administration's assessment of the country's trade balance with the United States. The United States imposed a tariff of 10% on most countries in the Americas, though Guyana (38%), Venezuela (15%), and Nicaragua (19%) received higher rates because they had trade surpluses with the United States. (Canada and Mexico were not included in this list because the administration had already imposed tariffs on them, and Cuba was not listed due to the decades-long trade embargo.) Many countries were not substantially impacted by the tariffs, as significant portions of their U.S. exports are exempt from the tariffs.





**FIGURE 2. New U.S. Tariff Rates Announced by President Trump for Countries in the Western Hemisphere on April 2, 2025**



Source: Center for Global Development data.

\*Note: Canada, Cuba, and Mexico are omitted

### Territorial Expansion

One of the more surprising elements of Trump's foreign policy early into his second term has been his interventionist rhetoric aimed at acquiring more U.S. territory. His rhetoric was most aggressive regarding Greenland, an island under Danish control, but he has also called for the return of the Panama Canal to the United States and for Canada to join the United States as the so-called "51<sup>st</sup> State."

In a March joint session of Congress, Trump said his administration was "reclaiming" the Panama Canal. Trump has alleged that China's presence in the canal is a U.S. national security concern to justify his desire to regain control. Defense Secretary Hegseth traveled to Panama to discuss the issue with President José Raúl Mulino. Mulino later described Trump's attacks as an affront to Panama's dignity

and declared the canal will forever remain under Panamanian control. Mulino aimed to address Trump's concerns by withdrawing from China's Belt and Road Initiative and expediting transit for U.S. warships and auxiliary vessels through the canal. In response to U.S. pressure, a Hong Kong company sold its majority stake in two ports located at either end of the canal.

In early December 2024, Trump referred to then-Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as "governor" and described the country as "the 51st state." The Canadian government initially dismissed it as one of Trump's many public musings, but in January, Trump told the press he would use economic power to take over Canada. He has also, according to media reports, questioned several treaties and agreements between the two countries.



U.S. interference in the Canadian and Panamanian national sovereignty has driven nationalism and stoked anti-American sentiment. In Panama, a historically strong U.S. ally, protests have emerged, with citizens calling on their government not to yield to U.S. threats and to reject a new agreement to grant the U.S. military access to Panamanian bases. In Canada, many consumers are boycotting American goods or refraining from traveling to the United States as a form of protest. Trump's words also contributed to the victory of the Liberal Party in the April elections, a party that was way behind in the polls before Trump's first comments. Mark Carney, upon assuming office as the country's new Prime Minister, declared that the old relationship between the U.S. and Canada is "over".

### Security

Security issues, particularly those related to transnational criminal organizations and the flow of illicit drugs, remain high on the administration's agenda for the Americas. However, the Trump administration's aggressive, unilateral approach has raised concerns in the region.

A notable and controversial development has been the administration's designation of ten groups as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs), six from Mexico, two from Haiti, one from Venezuela, and one from El Salvador. The administration has justified these designations to increase pressure on these organizations engaged in drug trafficking and other illicit crimes, yet these groups do not share characteristics with other global terrorist groups, and most were already designated under other transnational crime legal authorities,

which impose significant limitations on transactions. The FTO designation complicates the ability of entities to engage with these organizations, such as providing goods, services, or capital to any members of the organizations. This could undermine humanitarian objectives to provide services in areas governed by these organizations. It is also proven to be challenging for businesses, as many of these organizations are deeply embedded in local and regional economies. Lastly, some have suggested these designations have been exaggerated to make it easier for the U.S. government to deport immigrants in the United States with some connection to these organizations, or they could be used to justify future U.S. military action to address perceived threats.

In February, Mexico sent nearly 30 top cartel officials to the United States, representing one of the most significant recent efforts by Mexico to send drug traffickers to the United States to face charges in U.S. courts. It served as an early sign that Sheinbaum was seeking to cooperate with Trump to combat drug trafficking and other transnational crime. However, in June, the United States surprised Mexico by issuing orders for three financial institutions for being involved in money laundering for the trafficking of fentanyl and other drugs. The move prevents the transfer of some funds to these banks. Mexico has expressed concern that the United States has not shared any evidence to support its action, despite requests for credible information.

### Foreign Aid

Another significant development in Trump's foreign policy has been the dras-





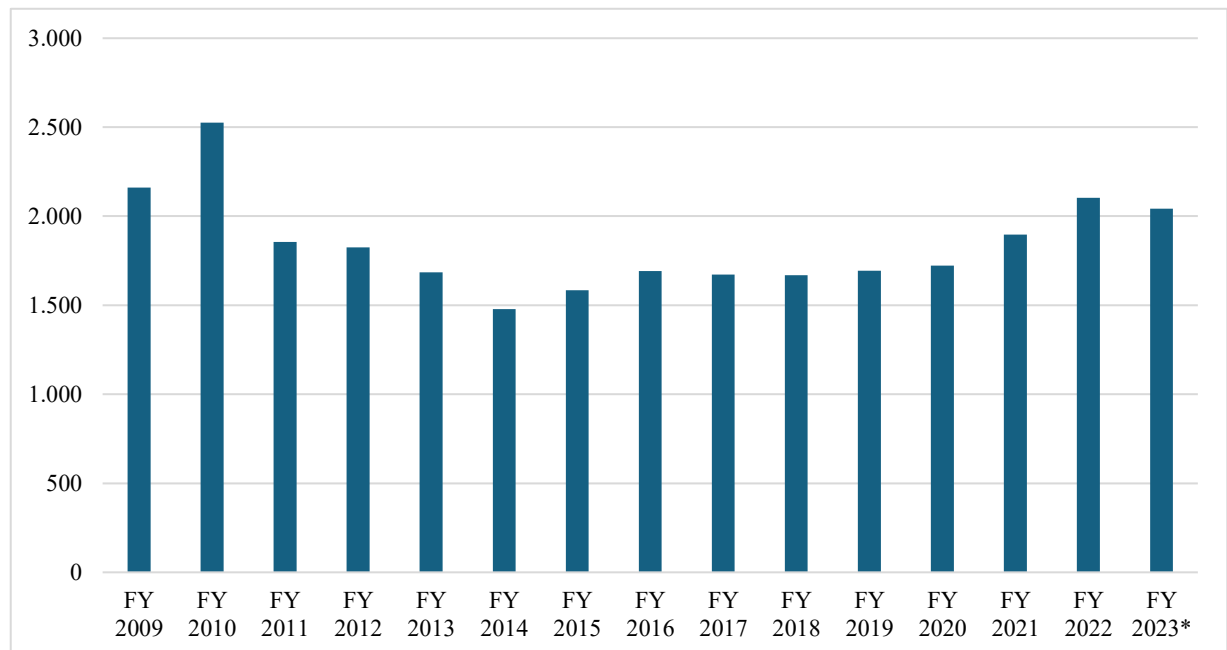
tic reduction in U.S. foreign assistance and the dismantling of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which is likely to have a substantial impact on the hemisphere. Department of State and USAID programs have historically supported initiatives related to economic development, justice sector reform, democratic institution-building, anti-corruption efforts, and human rights throughout the hemisphere.

As previewed during the Trump campaign, upon taking office, the administration implemented a 90-day freeze on foreign assistance to give it time to review programs to ensure alignment with the new administration. However, after the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) was constituted, it quickly started to announce federal government cuts,

including reductions in personnel and foreign assistance. Secretary of State Rubio announced an 83% reduction in USAID programs globally, with approximately 1,000 programs remaining. USAID was subsequently placed under the control of the Department of State. There are still no regional breakdowns to quantify the impact of these DOGE cuts on the hemisphere yet.

Trump and DOGE have similarly significantly reduced funding for smaller organizations that perform international work, including in Latin America, such as the Inter-American Foundation, the U.S. Institute of Peace, the National Endowment for Democracy, the Wilson Center, and the U.S. Agency for Global Media.

**FIGURE 3. U.S. Foreign Assistance to the Americas, Fiscal Year 2009 – 2023**  
(millions of U.S. dollars)



Source: Congressional Research Service reports.

\* FY 2023: estimate

The Biden administration requested \$2.2 billion in foreign assistance for Latin America and the Caribbean in FY 2025 for programs managed by the Department of State and USAID. That total is \$162 million above the estimated amount allocated for the region for FY 2023. The Trump administration, on the other hand, is requesting that Congress reduce overall foreign assistance funding by 47% and rescind previously approved funding in FY 2026. If approved, this would result in an 84% reduction in overall foreign assistance, although details on proposed FY 2026 funding levels for the Western Hemisphere are not yet available

### **Human Rights and Anti-Corruption**

The U.S. government has downgraded human rights, anti-corruption, and good governance as foreign policy priorities in the Trump administration. These actions represent a retreat from the U.S. government's historical, albeit imperfect, role of supporting human rights and anti-corruption efforts worldwide.

Secretary of State Rubio announced a restructuring of the Department of State in April, including the reorganization of 300 bureaus and offices. He later stated that he planned to eliminate up to 80% of the staff working for the Bureau for Human Rights and Labor, but it was unclear how this would be managed, given the more than \$400 million in grants for programs already approved by Congress. Rubio's proposal also calls for the creation of new positions that reflect the administration's views, such as emphasizing civilizational allies and debates over digital censorship.

The Department of State typically releases its annual human rights reports in the spring; however, the 2025 publication has been delayed as the new administration pursues a narrower approach. According to internal documents, the department plans to eliminate sections on the rights of women, freedom of expression and assembly, people with disabilities, corruption, LGBTQ+ discrimination, among others. It is not yet clear whether the new report will provide a comprehensive assessment of human rights or will selectively report on issues important to the administration.

Trump also signed an EO in February that suspends the enforcement of the Foreign Corruption Practices Act in part due to concerns that it undermines economic competitiveness. This move is likely to undermine anti-corruption efforts in Latin America by weakening a key deterrent against bribery. For example, nearly 60% of U.S. FCPA enforcement actions and more than 66% of FCPA-related prosecutions had connections with the Americas in 2022.

### **Countries of Concern: Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela**

*Cuba.* U.S. policy toward Cuba has returned to an aggressive and confrontational posture, a return to the "maximum pressure" strategy implemented in his first administration.

One of the Trump administration's first acts was to reinstate Cuba on the U.S. list of State Sponsors of Terrorism. In doing so, Trump backtracked on a commitment made by Biden to remove Cuba from the terrorism list in exchange for the release



of 553 inmates from Cuban prisons. Nonetheless, Cuba announced in March it had fulfilled its side of the deal.

The administration also reinstated sanctions on U.S. business dealings with companies owned or controlled by Cuban military, intelligence, or security personnel. It restored the right of Americans to sue over property confiscated on the island and, for the first time, announced it would deny visas for individuals who host Cuba's medical missions.

Cuba claimed that it sought to ease bilateral tensions and proposed migration talks, in which it was willing to accept deportation flights, but Washington has largely rebuffed these efforts.

*Haiti.* Haiti remains a significant focal point of regional concern as it is mired in overlapping political, security, and humanitarian crises. The country risks a full state collapse due to a surge in gang violence despite efforts by a Kenya-led multinational support mission to combat the gangs. The situation has gotten so dire that Haiti's interim government turned to Blackwater, a U.S. private security firm with a checkered history, to help combat the gangs.

While the United States has interests in Haiti, including stemming irregular migration and combating transnational criminal networks that exploit the country's instability, it remains unclear what the U.S. strategy is to address Haiti's serious challenges. The administration's broader strategy of deep cuts to foreign aid, elimination of legal channels of migration, and mass deportation efforts will be challeng-

ing for Haiti, which relies on external assistance and remittances to support its economy.

*Nicaragua.* U.S.-Nicaragua relations are characterized by growing hostility. Secretary of State Rubio called Nicaragua a "democracy that has been completely annihilated" and the Ortega regime the "enemy of humanity."

The administration has imposed visa restrictions on over 250 Nicaraguan officials and threatened to remove Nicaragua from the Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR). Special Envoy for Latin America Claver-Carone acknowledged that expelling Nicaragua from CAFTA-DR would require the other members of the trade bloc to support the move, but expected the process could begin before the end of 2025. Rubio has also emphasized that Nicaragua's role as a commercial partner and regional stabilizer was unsustainable, hinting at future economic and diplomatic consequences.

In response, Ortega has thus far maintained a low profile internationally. His regime has accepted U.S. deportation flights and abandoned its prior support for legal action against Israel in the International Court of Justice. Trump's actions have also played into Ortega's domestic narrative. Ortega has accused the Trump administration of hypocrisy, authoritarianism, and imperial ambition and celebrated the U.S. decision to freeze foreign assistance funding.

*Venezuela.* U.S. policy toward Venezuela in Trump's second term has thus far been



inconsistent, given competing internal factions within the administration. While the administration denounces the Nicolás Maduro regime—citing its authoritarianism, repressive tactics, and alliances with adversarial nations like China—some prioritize migration cooperation and access for U.S. businesses, resulting in a policy that fluctuates between confrontation and negotiation.

In late January, U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Missions Richard Grenell flew to Caracas and met with Maduro, an autocratic leader alleged to have stolen the last presidential election in July 2024. Venezuela then released six detained Americans and agreed to resume accepting U.S. deportation flights.

In February, Trump announced he would not extend the Department of the Treasury license that allows Chevron, a U.S. oil and gas company, to operate in Venezuela when it expires in May. Grenell later announced that the license would be extended after negotiating with Caracas for the release of a detained U.S. military veteran, citing support from Trump. However, just a few days later, Secretary of State Rubio declared that there would be no extension, and the license ended as planned at the end of May.

### China

Trump is pursuing an aggressive policy to counter China's influence in the Americas. Secretary of State Rubio has said that the United States is not ready to accept greater Chinese influence in the Americas, and China's growing presence in the hemisphere is a threat to U.S. interests.

The Trump administration has sought to discourage countries in the region from receiving Chinese investment. For example, at the urging of the Trump administration, Panama announced plans to withdraw from China's Belt and Road Initiative. It has also tried to encourage countries to recognize Taiwan, which would be a rebuke to China's "One China" policy.

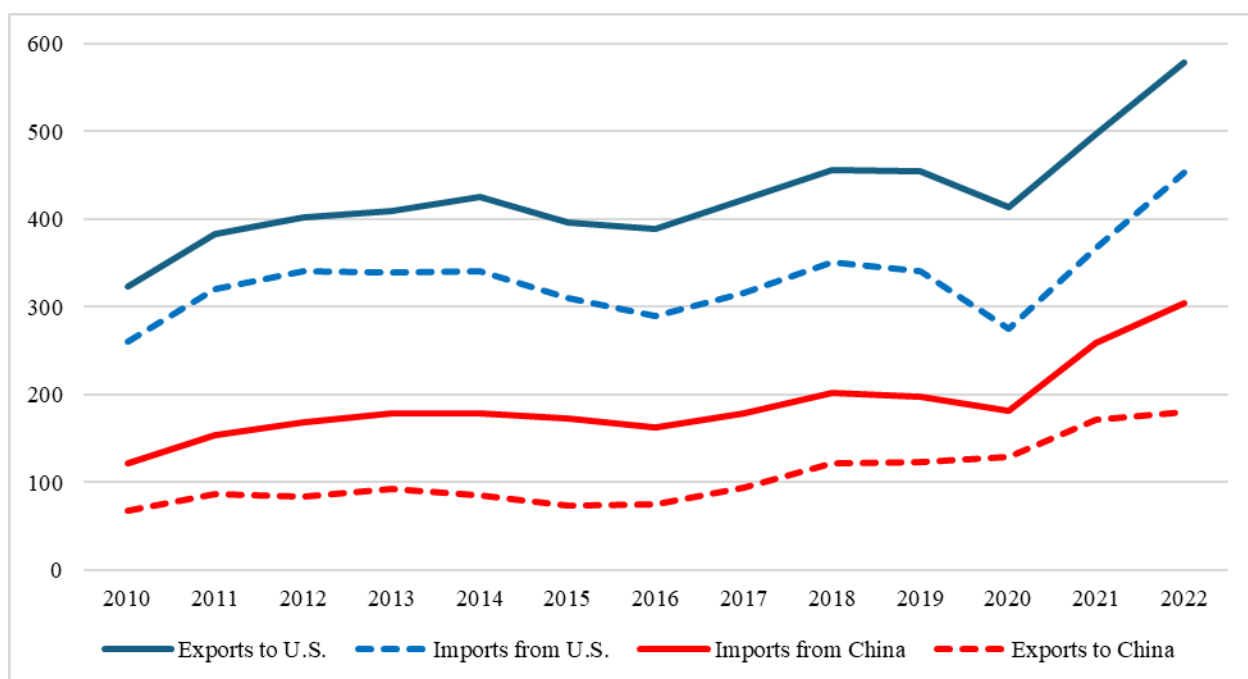
The administration is also seeking to reduce Chinese trade in North America, given the trade benefits covered by the USMCA. It objects to China's efforts to access the U.S. market by investing in Mexico to assemble Chinese components into goods for shipment to the United States, thereby allowing them to avoid U.S. tariffs. In a win for the Trump administration, Mexico declared in March that it would review tariffs on Chinese imports. It also announced the launch of anti-dumping investigations into Chinese imports of certain products.

However, the aggressive U.S. approach has alienated some regional partners while China's investment model, which generally avoids political conditions, has appealed to some countries seeking economic growth and greater autonomy. Public opinion in parts of the region is increasingly viewing China as a fairer and less intrusive partner. Following the Trump administration's decision to implement significant cuts in foreign aid, Colombia joined the Belt and Road Initiative. Brazil has also strengthened ties with China through green energy and industrial projects aligned with its development needs.

At a June meeting of the China-Community and Latin American and Caribbean States forum, Chinese President Xi Jinping unveiled an action plan for the region and pledged \$9.2 billion in loans to countries in the hemisphere to support regional infrastructure, digital transformation, and poverty reduction. Although this total is less than half of what was promised in 2015, there is no comparable U.S. regional investment plan for the region.

Outgoing Organization of American States Secretary-General Luis Almagro warned, as he departed his position in June, that the worst thing that could happen to the Americas “is to be forced to choose” between the United States and China. If the region stopped trading with China, he assessed it would be “a very violent regional economic disaster.”

FIGURE 4. U.S. and Chinese Trade with Latin America, 2010 – 2022 (US\$ Billions)



Source: World Integrated Trade Solution

### Conclusion

- U.S. foreign policy in the Americas has undergone a significant shift from the Biden administration to the Trump administration. In contrast with Biden’s approach of strengthening partnerships and alliances in the Americas to address shared challenges such as managing migration, economic prosperity, and climate

change, President Trump has adopted a forceful, unilateral approach that pursues narrow, bilateral deals to advance his objectives on immigration, trade, and China.

- Trump’s America First policies give little consideration to their impact on foreign countries, including some of the



United States' neighbors and closest allies, such as Mexico and Canada. They also often conflict and do not convey a broader, coherent hemispheric agenda.

ultimately backfire and drive other countries to move closer to Beijing.

- Trump's more coercive approach to engagement, relying on threats and punitive measures, has delivered him some early victories; however, these tactics will likely further isolate Washington and undermine U.S. credibility as a reliable ally and a hemispheric leader. According to a survey conducted from January to April, the percentage of citizens who had a favorable opinion of the United States dropped by 32% in Mexico and 20% in Canada over the past year.

- Trump's policies, such as massive deportations, tariffs, and drastic reductions in foreign aid, could trigger a cascade of negative consequences for the region, including undermining economic growth, increasing irregular migration, and driving countries to seek alternative, more stable diplomatic and economic partnerships.

- As geopolitical tensions escalate between the United States and China, many countries in the hemisphere will likely find it increasingly difficult to maintain their traditional non-alignment and may be forced to take sides. U.S. requests to reject Chinese investments will not be credible if the United States only seeks to dissuade countries from receiving the funds without providing credible alternatives that address the region's needs and deliver robust resources quickly. Moreover, Washington's aggressive approach to curb Chinese influence, coupled with its sweeping cuts to foreign assistance, may





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