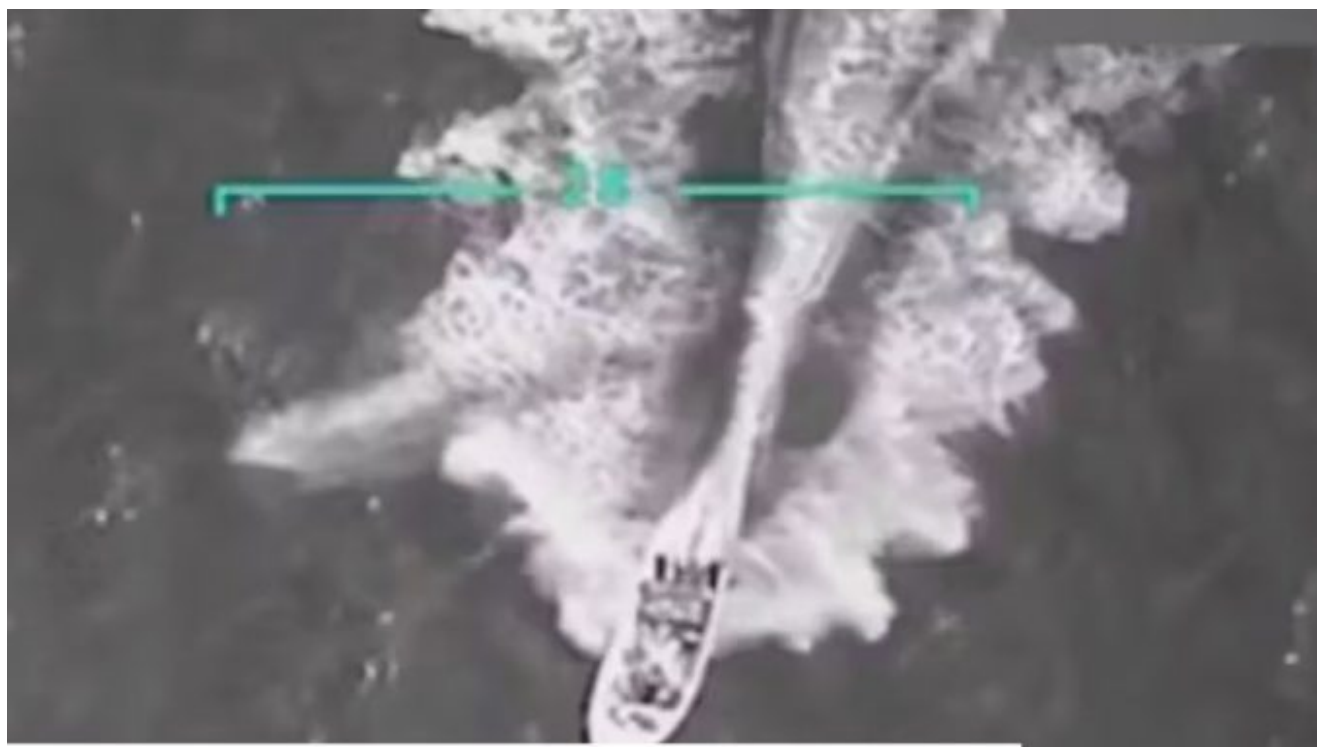


# Venezuela dismisses Trump's strike video as fake, warns of real U.S. war threat

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From the video posted by @realDonaldTrump on Truth Social. Was it AI?

On Sept. 2, President Trump released grainy footage of a speedboat erupting into flames on the high seas. Eleven alleged Venezuelan “narco-terrorists” had been vaporized, he announced triumphantly. No trial, no evidence, no due process — just a fireball and a press release.

Freddy Nanez, Venezuela’s communications minister, suggested that the clip Trump posted on Truth Social was fake and looked “cartoonish,” suggesting that the attack never happened.

Maybe it’s like the Gulf of Tonkin attack that never happened. President Johnson went on national television on Aug. 4, 1965, to announce that U.S. ships had been attacked in international waters (there was no such attack; it was entirely fiction). On Aug. 7, 1965, the U.S. Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, authorizing full-scale war on Vietnam.

With the alleged speedboat incident, the United States turned the Caribbean into a theater where once again U.S. warships serve as judge, jury, and executioner.

### **Manufacturing terrorists**

The legal alchemy required to justify killing civilians at sea begins with a linguistic trick: reclassifying drug traffickers as “terrorists.” Washington has spent months laying this groundwork, designating the Tren de Aragua prison gang and the phantom “Cartel of the Suns” as foreign terrorist organizations.

The Tren de Aragua gang is not an actual organization. The [Washington Post](#) reported that Tren de Aragua is more “like a brand name that any group of carjackers from Miami down to Argentina can invoke to further their criminal activity, but there’s really no clear sense of hierarchy” or organization. There’s no connection with the government of Venezuela whatsoever.

[Pino Arlacchi](#), former Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and

Crime, calls the Cartel of the Suns an entity as mythical as the Loch Ness Monster. The Cartel of the Suns does not actually exist as a structured organization — it is a U.S. intelligence construct used to criminalize Venezuelan officials wholesale.

No matter. Once labeled “narcoterrorists,” smugglers become legitimate military targets. The Pentagon can bypass the tedious business of arrest, extradition, and trial. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth made this clear on Fox News: “Anyone else trafficking in those waters who we know is a designated narco-terrorist will face the same fate.” Translation: We will kill them.

This represents a fundamental corruption of both international and domestic law. Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, nations may board and seize suspected trafficking vessels, but sinking civilian craft falls outside treaty authority. The U.S. Maritime Drug Law Enforcement Act establishes procedures for prosecuting maritime drug offenses through courts — not summary execution.

### **The Venezuela gambit**

The real target is not drugs but regime change in Caracas. The timing is telling: The strike occurred as at least nine U.S. warships deployed toward Venezuelan waters in what officials privately call “[Noriega Part 2](#)” — a reference to the 1989 invasion of Panama that toppled Manuel Noriega. When asked directly whether the goal was regime change in Venezuela, Hegseth offered the tell-tale non-denial: “That’s a presidential decision. ... we’re prepared with every asset that the American military has.”

The pretext is transparently fabricated. Trump claimed the boat’s occupants were members of Tren de Aragua controlled by President Nicolás Maduro — a connection [disputed](#) by U.S. intelligence agencies themselves. The administration has placed a \$50 million bounty on Maduro’s head over “narco-terrorism” charges, despite the fictional nature of the criminal network he allegedly leads.

This is gunboat diplomacy disguised as drug enforcement, with lethal force substituting for the inconvenience of evidence or legal process.

The constitutional implications are staggering. The Fifth Amendment's due process protections do not evaporate at the water's edge. U.S. citizens have been prosecuted under the MDLEA for maritime drug crimes and afforded full legal rights; foreign nationals deserve no less. By choosing annihilation over arrest, the administration has created a two-tiered system of justice where U.S. power determines who lives and who dies.

### **The Monroe Doctrine and China**

This has little to do with drugs and everything to do with targeting China.

Traditionally, the U.S. has maintained dominance in the Western Hemisphere via the Monroe Doctrine, sanctions, military interventions, and economic leverage. However, China's entry into Venezuela — home to the largest proven oil reserves globally — challenges this dominance. As the U.S. employed sanctions to isolate Venezuela, China stepped in with loans repayable in oil, infrastructure investment, and energy contracts, effectively turning U.S. sanctions into opportunities for China and Venezuela.

The drug war provides convenient cover for what amounts to economic warfare. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, in Mexico City, signaled that such strikes “will happen again.” The message to Latin America is clear: Align with Washington or face the consequences.

In response, Venezuelan military aircraft have conducted maneuvers near U.S. naval vessels operating off the country's coast in recent days. The government in Caracas has mobilized its coastal defense forces and heightened military alert levels, signaling its readiness in the event of further confrontation. President Nicolás

Maduro has issued a warning that Venezuela will declare itself a “republic in arms” and mobilize nationwide resistance if the U.S. launches an attack.

The Trump administration has launched a new model of maritime intervention that substitutes spectacle for evidence and assassination for arrest. Whether the speedboat incident really happened or it’s just an AI-generated propaganda cartoon, the precedent remains. And with it, a U.S. war on Venezuela.

