

# Pentagon confirms 'decapitation strikes' for Venezuela as armada builds

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In Caracas, thousands marched on Oct. 6 to denounce U.S. aggression in the

Caribbean and affirm Venezuela's right to sovereignty, peace, and self-determination. Screenshot from YouTube / CCTV Video News Agency

An immense naval and air armada — the largest in the Caribbean in a generation — is gathering off the coast of Venezuela. The Pentagon calls it a “regional security deployment.” But it looks, sounds, and moves like a war.

What Washington is building is not merely a show of force; it is a forward posture aimed at breaking the Bolivarian Republic's resistance and installing a pliant, pro-U.S. order in Caracas. Regime change is not an accidental byproduct of this mobilization — it is a central objective.

### **Regime change at the center of the operation**

Reporting in the Wall Street Journal and the Miami Herald has confirmed what observers and Venezuelan officials have long warned: The Pentagon and the White House have compiled target lists inside Venezuela and discussed so-called “decapitation strikes” meant to remove the country's leadership.

The deployment functions as both psychological warfare and military readiness. Its purpose is to intimidate Venezuelan officers, fracture loyalty within the armed forces, and present a fait accompli that weaker hands might accept rather than resist.

As Christopher Hernandez-Roy, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, put it, the whole show “is designed to scare the pants off the Maduro regime.”

Put another way: The U.S. hopes to frighten generals into turning on their government — or to have the firepower ready if intimidation fails. This is classic imperialist practice: destabilize from the outside while waiting for fractures from within.

## **A massive force on Venezuela's doorstep**

At the center of the operation is the USS Gerald R. Ford, the newest and costliest carrier ever built. With its strike group and support elements, the Ford brings nearly 10,000 personnel to the theater. It is accompanied by multiple guided-missile destroyers, a nuclear submarine, and the MV Ocean Trader — a floating Special Forces hub capable of launching helicopters and amphibious teams.

Air power has been mobilized on a continental scale. F-35 stealth fighters operate from bases in Florida and Puerto Rico; B-1B bombers conduct long-range patrols from airfields in Texas and North Dakota; and P-8 Poseidon surveillance aircraft fly near-daily intelligence sorties over the Caribbean. The logistics and command architecture assembled here would support sustained air and sea strikes across northern South America.

Even the ground is being remade for war. The Roosevelt Roads naval complex in Puerto Rico — shuttered since 2004 — is being revived as a launch point for regional operations. Civilian airports in Puerto Rico and St. Croix are being militarized with new ammunition depots, mobile air-traffic towers, and expanded runways, signaling an intention to sustain permanent power projection in the hemisphere.

This is not a drill. It is a forward operating network.

## **Threats to sovereignty across the region**

Venezuelan officials have condemned the deployments as an act of aggression. President Nicolás Maduro warned that the Trump administration is “fabricating a new eternal war” against Venezuela. Latin American governments — from Caracas to Havana, Managua, Bogotá, and across the Caribbean — view the armada as a direct threat to regional sovereignty.

Cuba, which has withstood more than 60 years of U.S. blockades and invasion

attempts, denounced the mobilization as part of Washington's escalating campaign to strangle independent nations of the hemisphere. The Cuban government warned that the buildup "revives the darkest traditions of gunboat diplomacy."

Nicaragua, a historic target of U.S. intervention and sanctions, has likewise condemned the escalation. President Daniel Ortega said it represents "a threat not only to Venezuela, but to all of Latin America that refuses to bow to the empire," describing the buildup as a U.S. attempt to "topple governments" in the region, according to a report by [Al-Mayadeen English](#).

Colombian President Gustavo Petro has called the U.S. presence a violation of Latin American autonomy, declaring, "The aggression is against all of Latin America and the Caribbean," in remarks reported by [Reuters](#). Caribbean leaders fear any pretext — real or manufactured — could ignite a wider conflict.

Control over Venezuela's vast oil reserves remains an obvious motive. U.S. strategists have long sought to bring those resources back under imperialist control. When the 2019 attempt to install U.S.-aligned proxy Juan Guaidó failed, Washington turned to sanctions, diplomatic isolation, and now overt militarization.

Guaidó's own 2019 operation was aided by Los Rastrojos, a Colombian narco-paramilitary group tied to drug trafficking along the border. Photographs published by Colombian and international media showed Guaidó posing with members of the gang who helped him cross into Colombia during the U.S.-backed "humanitarian aid" stunt. The episode exposed how Washington's coup project relied on criminal networks at the heart of the regional drug trade.

The new deployments mark the next stage in that same campaign: If political and economic pressure fail, open coercion will follow.

## **The costs of empire**

The human and financial toll is already severe. Operating a carrier group and long-range bomber sorties costs at least \$18 million per day — more than \$600 million since the deployment began. That figure represents billions diverted toward domination while tens of millions at home face cutbacks in food benefits, housing, and health care.

Violence has followed the deployment. At least 14 U.S. air and naval strikes in the Caribbean and Pacific have killed some 61 people — many unidentified — after being labeled by the Pentagon as “hostile.” Families on several islands insist the dead were fishermen, not combatants.

Volker Türk, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, condemned the attacks, stating:

“These attacks — and their mounting human cost — are unacceptable. The U.S. must halt such attacks and take all measures necessary to prevent the extrajudicial killing of people aboard these boats.” ([Al Jazeera](#))

These are not isolated tragedies. They are the predictable product of a military posture that treats entire waters and peoples as battlefields in a campaign to reassert empire.

