

# Who ordered the murder of Marielle Franco?

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 14, 2025



Mariella Franco, a Rio de Janeiro City Council member who protested police violence, was assassinated on March 14, 2018. Two former police officers were convicted of the killing but the question of who ordered Franco's assassination remains unanswered.

On March 14, 2018, the news of an attempt on Marielle Franco's life arrived as a notification in a WhatsApp group. It was a shock, but not unimaginable for a Black,

bisexual woman born in the Maré favela in Rio de Janeiro who embodied the struggles of the working class to be persecuted in Brazil.

Franco was on her way home from a roundtable discussion organized by the Socialism and Liberty Party (PSOL), the same party through which she was elected to the Rio de Janeiro City Council in 2016. Franco left the event accompanied by her driver, Anderson Gomes, and a parliamentary aide, Fernanda Chaves.

Shortly after departing, their car was ambushed in the Estácio neighborhood. The assassins, who were in another vehicle, fired multiple shots. Franco was killed, with three bullets to the head and one to the neck. Gomes was also fatally shot. Fernanda Chaves survived the attack. The investigation into the murders revealed that the ammunition used was linked to a batch sold to the Federal Police.

Throughout her career, Marielle Franco had been a vocal advocate for ending police brutality in Rio de Janeiro, a city notorious for its high levels of police violence. Between 2019 and 2023, the city's police were reported to have killed 21,498 people, making it one of the deadliest cities in the world in terms of police violence. Given the likelihood of underreporting, the actual number of fatalities is even higher. Franco's death signaled that her advocacy for victims of police violence had made her a target: someone was deeply bothered by her presence as an advocate in the City Council.

Six years later, in October 2024, two former police officers, Ronnie Lessa and Élcio de Queiroz, were convicted for their roles in Franco's murder. Lessa received a sentence of 78 years and 9 months, while Queiroz was sentenced to 59 years. Despite this conviction, the crucial question of who ordered Franco's assassination remains unanswered.

As a Black, bisexual woman from the working class, Franco embodied the intersectional struggle beyond the borders of Rio de Janeiro and Brazil. Her legacy

will not be forgotten, and we will never stop demanding the answer to who ordered her murder.

Marielle Franco, presente!



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## **Western imperialism is trying to strengthen its grip on Haiti**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
March 14, 2025

In recent years, the United States, France, and Canada have provided massive military and police aid to Haiti, while, [since last June](#), foreign troops continue to arrive in the country as part of the Multinational Security Support Mission (MSS). This “support” is not given to resolve Haiti’s security problems but rather to strengthen the control and repressive apparatus of the Western imperialist countries in a key neo-colony at this time of crisis in the world capitalist system.

Haiti’s strife and chaos are in large part the result of a profound popular uprising by Haiti’s ever-growing lumpen-proletariat, led by an array of “ghetto” armed groups

with different histories, ethics, levels of discipline, ideological outlooks, leadership styles, and survival strategies. But they all now agree (at least in principle) that Haiti's "system" must change, and they are not willing to surrender the power that they now wield to the corrupt political class and its local bourgeois and foreign masters that once used them as pawns.

The imperialists are determined to crush this autonomous popular power, which could become even more dangerous if it learns, develops, embraces, and articulates more clearly a scientific, revolutionary, and consciously anti-imperialist and socialist outlook and programme in the near future.

In Washington's eyes, this would be, in effect, the frightening emergence of another Cuba (only 50 miles away to the west) and that revolutionary virus could also "infect" the Dominican Republic, which shares the island of Hispaniola and is home to many Haitian migrants and Dominicans with Haitian parentage or family.

Such a development could also threaten the security, from the U.S. perspective, of the Windward Passage, a critical commercial maritime route between Haiti and Cuba for goods from the U.S. Eastern seaboard to the Panama Canal.

So the imperialist trio have stepped up their support to the Haitian National Police (PNH) and their MSS proxies so as to avoid their own direct military intervention (as in 1994 and 2004) and getting their hands and boots dirty. Furthermore, they are militarily and financially overextended with the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, and elsewhere.

Having failed to convince China and Russia to convert the MSS into a [genuine UN "peace-keeping" operation](#), UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres gave up on sending "blue helmets" to Haiti and is settling instead for continuation of the [anemic MSS](#).

Thus the UN is trying to raise \$908 million to pay for another year of MSS deployment in Haiti to install an “elected” government that will sign a bilateral 10-year military and economic pact with Washington called [the Global Fragility Act](#) (GFA), which we at *Haiti Liberté* have repeatedly warned about. The new U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio [made it clear](#) that this is still Washington’s goal, despite the wrecking ball that the new Trump administration has taken to many institutions of the “deep state,” like the soft-power juggernaut USAID, which was to be one of the GFA’s pillars.

Already from 2021 through 2024, Washington has done a lot. Just in the past year, the U.S. gave Haiti [10 all-terrain armored jeeps on May 19, 2024](#), and then it delivered 24 Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) [MaxxPro vehicles on Aug. 23, 2024](#). Washington’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) provided the PNH with [10 armored personnel carriers](#) (APCs) from Oct. 28 to Nov. 3, 2024. On Feb. 14, 2025, the INL again [delivered 20 Roshel Captain](#) armored vehicles to Haiti.

The U.S. and Canada had also delivered a number of Canadian-made INKAS armored cars to Haiti [in October 2022](#). On Feb. 15, 2020, Haiti [purchased 15 INKAS armored vehicles](#) from Canada, received by President Jovenel Moïse and Prime Minister Jean Michel Lapin.

France also gave the PNH [four armored vehicles](#) worth one million euros on Dec. 7, 2024. Meanwhile, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Canada [handed over 42 all-terrain vehicles](#), out of 59 to be given, to the PNH on Feb. 6, 2025.

Even the United Arab Emirates (UAE) gave the PNH 20 armored vehicles on Aug. 23, 2024.

Despite all these vehicles given, the neocolonial masters are not satisfied with nor

trusting of the PNH's repressive capacity, so they now have close to 1,000 foreign troops as a back-up in the form of the MSS. But they have to keep them equipped.

So on Feb. 10, *Le Nouvelliste* explained how Washington had given the PNH [plenty of "Weapons, Ammunition, and Vehicles"](#) including "nine vehicles, two trucks, two backhoe loaders, two wheel loaders, and a lowboy." Among the weapons delivered were 600 rifles and an unspecified amount of ammo.

"This is a donation valued at six million dollars," then President Leslie Voltaire declared at the ceremony to receive it from the INL. "All the equipment is armored. It will strengthen the police's operational capacity in the fight against armed gangs."

In addition to all this, the Transitional Presidential Council (TPC) increased the PNH's budget to 28.6 billion gourdes (\$218 million) and that of the Haitian Armed Forces to 8.8 billion gourdes (\$67 million), or 37.4 billion gourdes (\$285 million) for the Haitian state's two armed institutions. (With a budget of \$30.57 billion in 2025, spending on national security represents only 0.93% of GDP, but that may change with the new President Fritz Alphonse Jean.)

Despite everything, the armed groups have gained territory and intercepted and burned half a dozen armored vehicles in working-class neighborhoods. State universities are almost no longer functioning in the metropolitan area, schools are closed in the areas held by armed groups, and the underprivileged masses' informal commercial activities are at a standstill. The masses' living conditions are becoming untenable, car traffic is slowing down, and the displaced population has reached over 500,000.

The TPC authorities appear to be carefree and only focussed on their personal interests. Their emoluments and expenses are exorbitant in a country where the popular masses and the proletarian layers live in deplorable and unacceptable conditions; Political quarrels over the sharing of power complicate any resolution of

the crisis.

This entire bloated military and police arsenal is useless. Haiti's security problem is a result of the popular masses' living conditions, to the level of exploitation of the oppressed, and to the impunity associated with corruption.

Progressives must insist on building an autonomous tool for the popular masses to fully emancipate themselves from exploitation and domination. The masses cannot count on the traditional politicians, who are merely pawns of the Western imperialist powers. On the contrary, in the face of the generalized insecurity, the national liberation struggle's vanguard must take advantage of technological advances to discern and define a theory for Haiti's national liberation struggle, inspired by Marxism-Leninism, and maintain a presence on social networks for the work of raising awareness among the popular masses. This can bring a permanent mobilization to thwart the imperialist countries' neocolonial plundering and the waste of the state's meager resources through orchestrated corruption, nepotism, and overbilling.

It is imperative to destroy the repressive apparatus (army, police, militia, multinational force) and ideological apparatus (school, church, university, and media) of the neoliberal capitalist state in Haiti (which only serves Western powers) to build a socialist society.

**No to the military occupation of Haiti.**

**No to the renewal of the mandate of the MSS in Haiti.**

**Progressive Haitians, let us unite to struggle for Haiti's national liberation.**

**Freedom or Death! Homeland or Death!**

Source: [Haïti Liberté](https://www.haitiliberte.com)



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# **‘Fire of resistance to imperialism & fascism must flare up’**

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 14, 2025

*This statement was prepared by the Ukrainian Marxist organization Borotba (Struggle) and adopted by the participants of Interforum (International Anti-fascist Forum), which was held in Lugansk, capital of the Lugansk People's Republic, on Feb. 25, 2025. Borotba has been banned in Ukraine since 2014.*

## **Declaration of the Interforum: International Anti-fascist Forum of Donbass**

May 9 marks 80 years since the Great Victory of the Soviet Union over Nazi Germany. Almost a whole century separates us from those events; however, it is precisely now that we see the colossal influence they continue to have on the entire world.

The Second World War did not begin “just like that.” It did not arise from thin air. It

was brought about by a tangle of contradictions in international politics, which they tried to cut through with the help of war.

The reasons that divided the world into supporters of Nazi ideas and anti-fascists more than 80 years ago exist today. Western corporations and finance capital, for many years, armed Hitler and created a capable army in order to direct it against those from whom they felt threatened: the Soviet Union.

Today we see a repetition of the world tragedy that occurred in the 1930s-40s. Western imperialism has already begun aggression against those who disagree with the U.S.-centric world order. It is gathering a strike force aimed at the peoples and countries that are trying to pursue independent and sovereign policies: against Russia, China, North Korea, Cuba, Iran, Venezuela, Nicaragua, and many others.

This strike force includes Ukrainian fascists, Israeli Zionists, jihadists from Africa and the Middle East, and Latin American “death squads.” This multifaceted “international” of new fascism, which has already begun its “crusade” against the peoples of the planet, has as its client and sponsor transnational financial capital.

Today, this “evil international” is changing leadership - instead of the failed neoliberals, it is acquiring harsh, cynical, and aggressive leaders in the form of the new right-wing administration of the USA under Donald Trump and the billionaire Elon Musk, raising his hand in a Nazi salute.

The new leadership in Washington has already made its claims on the Panama Canal, expressed support for the Argentine neoliberal fascist Javier Milei and European far-rightists, begun threatening Russia with new sanctions and Iran with war, and supported the Israeli genocide in Gaza.

### **Key turning point**

The aggression of the West against the peoples of the former USSR, especially

Russia, which began at the hands of the fascist regime in Kiev in 2014, became the key turning point in the politics of Western imperialism toward militarization, reaction, and preparation for a great war.

Right here, we are convinced, the fire of resistance to imperialism and the new fascism must also flare up.

The first sparks of this resistance were the heroic struggle of Donbass against Ukrainian Nazism, continued by Russia's Special Military Operation. We emphasize that this is not an isolated or regional situation - it is part of the global struggle against the USA, NATO, the European Union, and other forces and organizations of imperialist hegemony.

The goal of our enemies is the same as it was more than 80 years ago - the capture and subjugation of the markets, natural and human resources of the planet, and the destruction of an alternative to the existing world order, which was represented by the USSR at that time, and now by a number of countries opposing the unipolar U.S.-centered world.

The rightward turn toward reaction and new fascism, which is currently happening in the West, can only be resisted by a united front of international anti-fascist and anti-imperialist solidarity of peoples. Our Forum is intended to become one of the points of crystallization of this resistance.

We call on everyone who shares our concerns about the growth of fascist sentiments in society not to remain silent, but to openly and loudly express their position!

We call on everyone on the 80th anniversary of the Great Victory to honor the memory of anti-fascist heroes in all countries, where people took the path of struggle against the brown plague: the heroes of ELAS in Greece, anti-fascists of the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia, participants in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and

partisans of the People's Army in Poland, Garibaldian Brigades and Matteotti Brigades in Italy, comrades of Ernst Thälmann in Germany, thousands of underground fighters of the Resistance in France, Spain, Austria, Romania, and other countries!

We call to build and strengthen ties with like-minded people today, because tomorrow we will all face a difficult fight, and we need to prepare for it now!

For international solidarity and joint actions against fascism and imperialism!



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## **Trump's NATO demands signal tech billionaire priorities, not peace**

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 14, 2025

President Donald Trump made it no secret during his election campaign that if he won, he expected Europe to "pay their fair share" regarding NATO and the war in Ukraine. Many in the Republican Party, including Trump himself, have claimed that the aim of this is to "end the suffering" and "have a peace that is good for both

sides."

However, Trump's somewhat performative hostility toward Zelensky and new demands on Europe have nothing to do with peace or justice. These shifts do not represent a willingness to end Western hostility but a redeployment of resources.

### **Tech billionaires' focus on China**

It is no secret that Trump has a significant support base among tech billionaires. This includes Elon Musk, Sundar Pichai, Jeff Bezos, and Mark Zuckerberg. This group of capitalists is more concerned with China's growing investment in quantum computing technology, artificial intelligence, and electric vehicles. Chinese companies such as DeepSeek in AI and BYD in the electric vehicle market are beginning to pull ahead of Western alternatives. What Musk and Silicon Valley are not interested in, is a costly unwinnable ground war that mostly serves as a boon for old money [defense conglomerates](#) and [fossil fuel barons](#) like General Dynamics, ExxonMobil, and Northrop Grumman.

China is the far greater threat to Silicon Valley's profits and thus to Trump's ruling-class base of support. Trump's focus on securing a rare earth metals deal with Ukraine is further evidence of an imperialist realignment in focus on the People's Republic of China. China controls a significant portion of the global supply of rare earth metals necessary for all high-tech equipment. Securing alternative supply chains would be the first step in opening up Trump's ability to escalate economic or military conflict with the PRC.

### **Balancing competing business interests**

That realignment in focus should not be mistaken for a true U.S. softening on Russia or even a sign that the war in Ukraine will quickly come to a close. Even with the cost to the taxpayer, the war in Ukraine has still been wildly profitable for many in

the ruling class. The increased price of oil and the record spending to replenish military arsenals have made defense and fossil fuel companies billions of dollars. For that reason, Musk and Trump cannot completely end the gravy train of profits from the NATO war against Russia without significant backlash from that part of the ruling class.

To be able to escalate against China while also not chaotically leaving billions of dollars on the table in Ukraine, Musk and Trump's plan seems to be twofold. First, Trump has not yet shown willingness to hold the delivery of already funded military aid indefinitely. Second, the United States will force Europe to foot enough of the bill to keep the war, and thus the profits, going for at least some period of time. The EU is already considering an [\\$840 billion plan](#) to rearm Europe, particularly Ukraine. This way, the ruling class can avoid the chaotic withdrawal similar to what the Biden administration experienced in Afghanistan. Whether this will work or not is yet to be seen.

Several European countries have already pledged their largest assistance packages to date over the past few weeks. Recently elected German Chancellor Friedrich Merz has already presented a [\\$3.2 billion](#) military aid package for Ukraine to the German legislature. The Norwegian Prime Minister recently announced that the country will spend [\\$3.12 billion](#) in mostly military aid to Ukraine in 2025. Finland will immediately provide [\\$691 million](#) in combat equipment to Ukraine's fascist military. Just days ago, Britain announced a [\\$2.84 billion](#) loan to Ukraine to continue the war. All of these deals have been announced since Trump took office.

The European countries can adopt [harsher rhetoric](#) against the Trump administration, but they are undermined by the fact that they are already doing exactly what Trump wants. Europe will increase military spending and keep NATO's war in Ukraine going until the U.S. can try to make a graceful exit. This could very well be a ruling class fantasy considering that it is unlikely Russia will accept

anything less than the full demilitarization of Ukraine. Russia will not end the war that they are winning, having sacrificed so much, just to allow a NATO bridgehead on its western border, nor should they. What this burden sharing shift to Europe makes abundantly clear, more than ever, is that the war in Ukraine was a NATO project aimed at Russia [from its onset](#).

### **Shifting priorities, not pursuing peace**

Regardless of whether a peace agreement comes in Ukraine, or if the European Union takes over arming Ukraine, or the U.S. continues the campaign directly, Trump and Musk's actions will not lead to greater peace in the world. Much like how the Biden administration pivoted from Afghanistan in 2021 and was already fighting Russia in Ukraine in early 2022, expect any U.S. withdrawal from Eastern Europe to be quickly followed by a new military campaign against China, Iran, or even Mexico. This new political administration's plan is not to pursue peace in the world, it is simply to cool the assault on one front so as to be more effective on another.



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# U.S. financial warfare: Sanctions target Russia and China

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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Donald Trump may appear to conduct the White House as if it were part of “The Apprentice” television series — he’s rumored to have said “You’re fired” to Zelensky. His Secretary of Education is Linda McMahon of World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE has been newly tapped to train FBI agents). But it’s not really a three-ring circus no matter how it looks.

It’s a no-holds-barred war machine with a ruthless manipulator at the helm — war at home and war abroad. To Zelensky, Trump said we want Ukraine’s rare earth minerals; that’s “the deal or we’re out.”

What you don’t see on the TV news or in the social media feeds, but you will find in the business press like [Bloomberg News](#), is a report that “Secretary of State Marco Rubio told European allies that the Trump administration would keep its Russia sanctions in place.” On Feb. 27, Trump issued an executive order that extended

Biden's sanctions against Russia for another year.

### **Sanctions are a key weapon**

The sanctions are a key weapon in the U.S. war on Russia ... and China.

The U.S. dominates the world's money system by controlling a network called SWIFT, which banks use every day for global transactions.

SWIFT is the main system for international money transfers. Without it, countries can't easily do business with each other. The U.S. has effectively weaponized access to SWIFT as part of its sanctions regime.

Many people call this method the "nuclear option" of sanctions. It means cutting off a country's access to SWIFT, which can seriously hurt its ability to trade.

As Foreign Policy magazine explained when Biden imposed sanctions on Russia, removing Russian banks from the SWIFT system has disabled Russia's international trade. ("[What does Russia's removal from SWIFT mean for the future of global commerce?](#)")

Because of the sanctions, Chinese banks are afraid of doing business with Russian businesses out of fear of being frozen out of dollar transactions through SWIFT.

### **Trade problems between Russia and China**

A report published on [InfoBRICS](#) (the joint website of the ministries of foreign affairs of the BRICS member states) outlined the problems the sanctions have caused in Russian-Chinese economic relations.

The report says U.S. sanctions have caused serious trade problems between Russia and China. Until recently, Russia and China claimed to have their "best relations in history." But now, [since mid-2024](#) when Biden imposed new sanctions on Russia and

China, Chinese banks have been rejecting and returning approximately 80% of Russian payments made in Chinese yuan. Chinese banks are even refusing money from other countries if the sender has a Russian name. This affects small businesses and huge projects like Arctic LNG-2, which produces natural gas. China is being careful because it doesn't want to lose access to U.S. and European markets, which are still very important to its economy.

Since 2014, Russia has been trying to develop ways to do business without depending on Western financial systems. This included using Russian and Chinese currencies instead of dollars and euros. In 2023, [about 95% of trade](#) between Russia and China used their own currencies instead of dollars. However, this didn't protect their trade relationship because they still rely on U.S.-controlled payment systems for most international transactions.

Russia and China have often discussed connecting their payment systems (SFPS and CIPS) but have yet to do so.

They are trying to solve these problems by using "workarounds" — like finding payment middle agents in other countries or trading goods directly instead of using money. Some try to work with smaller Chinese banks, but this doesn't always work. These methods all cost more money and time. Besides being unreliable and expensive, these workarounds also damage the relations of both countries.

China has experience working with countries under sanctions, such as North Korea and Iran. They could create special financial organizations just to work with Russia, but this would take time and money because Russia and China do so much business together. There's only one Russian bank branch in Shanghai, which can't handle all the business needs. Even though other Russian banks plan to open offices in China, this won't solve the bigger problem.

All these temporary solutions treat the symptoms but not the cause of the problem.

This situation shows how the U.S. can threaten relationships between independent countries. If a country challenges U.S. hegemony, its ability to trade with others can be severely limited — sometimes just through threats alone.

## **BRICS Pay**

The world is changing, with developing countries aligning through multilateral groups like BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, and now six more countries: Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia). BRICS represents 45% of the world's population and 37% of the world's GDP. On Jan. 1, 2025, nine nations were announced as the first BRICS partner countries: Belarus, Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Cuba, Malaysia, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan, and Nigeria.

The report on InfoBRICS suggests that the payment problems between Russia and China might be solved by creating the BRICS Pay system. This system, built using blockchain technology (the same technology behind Bitcoin), could replace SWIFT.

BRICS Pay remains in the proposal and developmental stages. In October 2024, Russian Minister of Finance Anton Siluanov indicated that the details of the BRICS Pay system that would be acceptable to all participants should be ready within a year.

But BRICS Pay has not been agreed upon. There are significant technical, political, and regulatory issues yet to be worked out.

There is not yet any alternative to the Bretton Woods institutions based on the U.S. dollar, no alternative to the SWIFT system.

For now, U.S. sanctions are waging direct and indirect war on Russia and China, in particular through U.S. control and manipulation of the SWIFT system.



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# **Trump wants U.S. to ‘partner’ with Russia to weaken China: Divide-and-conquer strategy**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
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**The U.S. government’s talks with Russia are more about China than Ukraine. Donald Trump admitted he wants to “un-unite” Russia and China, in a reverse of the divide-and-conquer strategy used by Nixon and Kissinger in the 1970s.**



The Donald Trump administration is holding talks between the United States and Russia, and he says he wants to end the war in Ukraine.

Trump's Secretary of State Marco Rubio has even proposed that the U.S. could "partner with the Russians, geopolitically."

What is happening here? The simple answer is that this is all about China.

Trump is trying to divide Russia from China, in an attempt to isolate Beijing.

The United States sees China as the number one threat to its global dominance. This has been stated clearly by top officials in both the Trump administration and the previous Joe Biden administration.

Rubio dubbed China "the single greatest challenge this nation has ever faced." Trump's CIA Director John Ratcliffe asserted that "China was far and away our top

national security threat".

## Trump's plan to split Russia and China

Trump made this strategy clear in an [interview with Tucker Carlson](#), the right-wing talk show host, on October 31, 2024.

Trump said it was a "shame" and it was "stupid" that the U.S. had pushed China and Russia together.

"I'm going to have to un-unite them, and I think I can do that, too. I have to un-unite them," Trump stated.

The following is a partial transcript of his remarks (emphasis added):

*We are a nation in decline. We are a nation in very serious decline. And look at what these stupid people have done. They've allowed Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, and others to get together in a group. This is impossible to think.*

*When I was a young guy, I loved, I always loved the whole thing, the concept of the history, and all of the things that can happen. The one thing — and I had a professor at the Wharton School of Finance, but we had history classes also.*

*He said the one thing you never want to happen is **you never want Russia and China uniting**. We united them, because of the oil. We united them. Biden united them. It's a shame, the stupidity of what they have done.*

*I'm going to have to un-unite them, and I think I can do that, too. I have to un-unite them.*

*But early on I've read, and you've learned, you never want Russia and China — and they're natural enemies, because Russia has massive land, and China needs it.*

...

*They're a natural enemy. And we've allowed them become, to get together. It's such a dangerous thing.*

*Another thing that we're doing is we're losing the dollar as the standard, because of these people that are so — if we lose the dollar as the standard, that's like losing a war. And it'll never happen with me. There's no way that will happen with me.*

## **Trump threatens BRICS**

What is noteworthy is how Trump immediately linked the close partnership between China and Russia to the issue of [de-dollarization](#), the international drive to create alternatives to the U.S. dollar as the global reserve currency.

China is Russia's largest trading partner, and the two countries have almost entirely [removed the U.S. dollar from their bilateral trade](#). Instead, they now use their domestic currencies, the renminbi and ruble, in more than 90% of settlements.

Fears of de-dollarization have led Trump to threaten 100% tariffs on BRICS countries and other nations that [drop the dollar](#) in international trade and foreign exchange reserves.

"I hate when countries go off the dollar. [I would not allow countries to go off the dollar](#)", Trump declared during his presidential campaign in 2024.

Since returning as U.S. president, Trump has given himself credit for supposedly killing BRICS. ["BRICS is dead", he claimed](#) in a press conference at the White House on February 13.

In reality, BRICS has continued expanding, admitting in early 2025 new countries

with large populations, like [Indonesia](#) and [Nigeria](#). The Global South-led organization now represents roughly 55% of the world population and 42% of global GDP (PPP).

Nevertheless, Trump has continued to threaten them. “If they want to play games with the dollar, they’re going to be hit with a 100% tariff”, he warned.

### **Trump’s reverse Nixon/Kissinger strategy**

Trump’s attempt to divide Russia and China, to try to save U.S. imperial dominance, is far from secret. It has been debated openly in the Western media, with [Foreign Affairs magazine](#) cautioning that “Beijing and Moscow’s partnership will be hard to break”.

The Wall Street Journal stated clearly that “Washington’s embrace of Putin aims to [drive wedge between Moscow and Beijing](#).”

The Western press has dubbed this strategy a “[reverse Nixon](#),” referring to former U.S. President Richard Nixon.

Nixon and Trump have many similarities. Both were hard-line right-wing Republicans who used “populist” rhetoric. Both also sought to exploit divisions between Russia and China — albeit in opposite directions.

Although he was a virulent anti-communist, Nixon took a historic trip to Beijing in 1972 in order to normalize relations with the People’s Republic of China.

Washington saw the Sino-Soviet split, which happened in the 1960s, as an opportunity to advance its imperial power by exacerbating the tensions between China and the USSR.

This ended up being an important factor in the decline of the Soviet Union in the

1980s, and its eventual overthrow in 1991.

Trump's strategy has also been referred to as a "[reverse Kissinger](#)," because Nixon's National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger was the architect of the tactic, known as "triangular diplomacy".

Kissinger took a secret trip to Beijing in 1971, in an attempt to further divide China and the USSR.

Decades later, Kissinger thought the United States should return to this "triangulation" strategy to weaken China.

In fact, Kissinger had advised Trump during his first administration that he should try to [improve relations with Russia to isolate China](#), the Daily Beast reported in 2018.

Ironically, it was the [Russiagate conspiracy theory](#) pushed by the Democratic Party that prevented Trump from pursuing this Kissingerian strategy during his term. Democrats' baseless, nonsensical claims that Trump was a "[puppet of Putin](#)" distracted from his more insidious new cold war strategy, aimed at kneecapping China.

In his second term, however, Trump has fully embraced this strategy.

### **Marco Rubio wants USA "to partner with the Russians, geopolitically"**

In both his first and second term, Trump has surrounded himself with neoconservatives and war hawks.

In his first administration, Trump's foreign policy was overseen by neocons John Bolton, as national security adviser; and Mike Pompeo, first as CIA director and later as secretary of state.



In his second administration, Trump's foreign policy is overseen by neocons Marco Rubio, as secretary of state; Mike Waltz, as national security advisor; and Pete Hegseth, a self-declared "crusader" serving as defense secretary.

All of these figures are extreme China hawks who have pushed for aggressive policies against Beijing.

They also agree with Trump's strategy to try to woo Moscow.

This is why, when Trump sent Rubio to Saudi Arabia in February to participate in talks with his Russian counterparts, he proposed that the United States could "partner with the Russians, geopolitically."

The U.S. secretary of state said:

*[We are] beginning to engage in identifying the extraordinary opportunities that exist, should this conflict come to an acceptable end, the incredible opportunities*

*that exist to partner with the Russians, geopolitically, on issues of common interest, and frankly economically, on issues that hopefully will be good for the world, and will also improve our relations in the long term between these two important countries.*

In fact, in a [Senate hearing in 2024, Rubio argued](#) that the U.S. should help bring an end to the war in Ukraine, not because hundreds of thousands of people have lost their lives, but rather because it was helping China, he complained.

“The Chinese see great benefit in Ukraine,” Rubio said, “because they view it as, the more time and money we spend there, the less time, and money, and focus we have on them.”

Rubio’s argument was essentially that the U.S. empire should end the proxy war against Russia in Ukraine so it could instead focus on preparing for war against China.

### **Western far right wants to ally with Russia against China**

Although Rubio’s proposal to “partner” with Russia surprised some observers, this strategy has been proposed for years by members of the far-right “MAGA” movement in the Republican Party.

Many MAGA Republicans are influenced by racist white nationalist ideas and see China not only as a threat to U.S. imperial dominance, but also as an Asiatic, atheist, communist threat to capitalism and white, “Judeo-Christian Western civilization.”

On the other hand, many conservatives in the U.S. and Europe see Russia as a potential ally, given that it is capitalist, white, and predominately Christian.

Far-right politicians in Europe have argued the same. [France’s far-right leader](#)

[Marine Le Pen](#) called the China-Russia partnership “the largest danger of the 21st century for us.”

She insisted that the West shares “common civilizational and strategic interests” with Russia and should break to break its close relations with socialist China.

Le Pen stated:

*Imagine ... if we let the first producer of raw materials in the world — which is Russia — [create an alliance] with the first factory of the world — which is China — to let them perhaps constitute the first military power of the world. I believe that it's potentially a great danger.*

...

*It will be necessary diplomatically, when the war [in Ukraine] is over, when a peace treaty has been signed, to try to avoid this tie-up which risks being the largest danger of the 21st century for us.*

Fox News and other conservative U.S. media outlets have pushed this same message for a decade.

This is one of the favorite refrains of [Tucker Carlson](#), the far-right talk show host and close Trump ally who previously hosted a program on Fox News, which was the most popular politics TV show in the United States.

Carlson repeatedly argued that “the biggest threat to this country is not Vladimir Putin. That’s ludicrous. The biggest threat, obviously, is China.”

In [multiple programs, Carlson asserted](#), “Russia is not America’s main enemy. Obviously, no sane person thinks it is. Our main enemy, of course, is China, and the United States ought to be in a relationship with Russia, aligned against China, to the

extent that we can."

Carlson complained that a China-Russia partnership would end "American global hegemony."

Although he portrays himself as a "populist," [Carlson previously applied to join the CIA](#). His goal is to preserve U.S. imperial dominance.

On his Fox News program, [Carlson stated](#):

*If Russia ever joined forces with China, American global hegemony, its power, would end instantly. You'd have the world's largest land mass and largest natural gas reserves, allied with the world's largest population and world's largest economy.*

*So a Russia-China axis would be not just more powerful than the United States, but much more powerful. It would have the scale to control a lot of the world's economy, and trade routes, and raw materials. It could project military force that, posturing aside, we actually don't have the power to stop.*

*If Russia and China ever got together, it would be a brand new world, and the United States would be greatly diminished. Most Americans agree that would be bad.*

In fact, when he still hosted his show on Fox, [Carlson regularly invited on Rubio](#) to fearmonger about China.

The following is a partial transcript of a segment featuring the then Florida senator, who now serves as secretary of state:

**MARCO RUBIO:** *They are also undermining our technological base through something called Made in China 2025, where they intend not just to supplant*

*America, but all countries on Earth, and the West, in automobiles, and passenger aircraft, and quantum computing, and artificial intelligence.*

*They've laid out the entire industries, and they're slowly but surely carrying out this plan.*

**TUCKER CARLSON:** *So this is a threat, obviously, not simply to our economy, but to our predominance around the world, to our power, and to our values.*

## **Rubio calls China the “single greatest challenge” ever faced by the U.S. empire**

Rubio has for years pushed for an extremely aggressive U.S. policy against China.

In a [Senate hearing in 2024, Rubio complained](#) that China is trying to change the “rules of the world” that “were written by America and our allies”:

*The Chinese, they believe we're in inevitable decline, and that their rise is inevitable as well. Like I said, they don't like the rules of the world as they believe were written by America and our allies, and so they increasingly are taking it upon themselves at every opportunity to challenge them.*

In a separate Senate hearing in 2022, Rubio warned that China could replace the United States as the most powerful country on Earth:

*We often talk about China's plans and intentions behind closed doors. But the fact of the matter is that their ultimate goal, and what they're trying to do, is really not that big a secret.*

*They seek to displace the United States and to become the world's most dominant economic, industrial, technical, and military, and geopolitical power. That's their*

*goal.*

In the 2022 hearing, Rubio referred to China as “the single greatest challenge this nation has ever faced”, and he claimed that the People’s Republic is much more of a threat than the Soviet Union ever was:

*The intelligence community, I think at this point, leaders on both sides of the aisle, have been pretty clear that this is the single greatest challenge this nation has ever faced.*

*We have never faced a near-peer adversary that poses such a comprehensive challenge, that way that China does today.*

*The Soviet Union was a military and a geopolitical rival; they were never an industrial, and technical, or commercial rival. China is all of that and more.*

## **CIA says China is “the most important geopolitical threat we face in the 21st century”**

Nevertheless, it is not just neoconservative Republicans like Marco Rubio who see China as the main threat to U.S. global dominance.

This view has become bipartisan in Washington.

In 2021, the [CIA launched a “China Mission Center,”](#) which is the only mission center at the notorious coup-plotting U.S. spy agency that is specifically focused on one country.

That year, the [CIA announced on its official website](#) that it considered China to be the top “threat” to the United States.

CIA Director William Burns “explained that the new mission center will bring a whole-of-Agency response and unify the exceptional work CIA is already doing against this key rival”, wrote the infamous U.S. spy agency, which has [meddled in the internal affairs of countless countries and assassinated foreign heads of state.](#)

Burns fearmongered about “the most important geopolitical threat we face in the 21st century, an increasingly adversarial Chinese government”.

Trump’s pick for CIA director, [John Ratcliffe](#), praised Burns’ work at the agency and made similar comments in his [Senate confirmation hearing](#) in January 2025.

[Ratcliffe stated](#) (emphasis added):

*Much more has to be done. Because our adversaries, and one in particular that I will discuss now, understand that the nation who wins the race of emerging technologies of today will dominate the world of tomorrow.*

*Which brings me to the need for the CIA to continue, and increase in intensity, the focus on the threats posed by China and its ruling Chinese Communist Party.*

***As DNI [director of national intelligence], I dramatically increased the intelligence community's resources devoted to China.***

***I openly warned the American people that, from my unique vantage point as an official who saw more intelligence than anyone else, I assess that China was far and away our top national security threat.***

***President Trump has been an incredible leader on this issue, and it is encouraging that a bipartisan consensus has emerged in recent years.***

***The recent creation of the CIA's China Mission Center is an example of the good work that must continue.***

## **U.S. State Department warns China is top “threat” to U.S. global imperial dominance**

In both the Biden and Trump administration, the State Department made similar warnings, fearing that China could challenge U.S. imperial dominance.

In a speech in May 2022, [Biden's Secretary of State Antony Blinken](#) warned:

*Even as President Putin's war continues, we will remain focused on the most serious long-term challenge to the international order - and that's posed by the People's Republic of China.*

*China is the only country with both the intent to reshape the international order and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to do it.*

The message was essentially identical during Trump's first term.

Trump's CIA director turned secretary of state, [Mike Pompeo, delivered a similar speech](#) at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum in California in July 2020.

Using very aggressive, cold war-style rhetoric, Pompeo essentially called for overthrowing the Chinese government and the Communist Party of China. He stated:

*We, the freedom-loving nations of the world, must induce China to change, just as President Nixon wanted. We must induce China to change in more creative and assertive ways, because Beijing's actions threaten our people and our prosperity.*

*We must start by changing how our people and our partners perceive the Chinese Communist Party. We have to tell the truth. We can't treat this incarnation of China as a normal country, just like any other.*

...

*And if we don't act now, ultimately the CCP will erode our freedoms and subvert the rules-based order that our societies have worked so hard to build. If we bend the knee now, our children's children may be at the mercy of the Chinese Communist Party, whose actions are the primary challenge today in the free world.*

*General Secretary Xi is not destined to tyrannize inside and outside of China forever, unless we allow it.*

Many of these hawkish views are shared by NATO.

[NATO's secretary-general Jens Stoltenberg](#) praised the first Trump administration for its extreme anti-China policies.

"You shifted your policy on China in 2017 under President Trump, and since then, NATO has gone a long way in helping European allies fully appreciate the challenges posed by China and respond to it," Stoltenberg said at the right-wing U.S. think tank the Heritage Foundation in Washington in 2024.

### **Trump admin invokes China to try to justify U.S. colonialist policies**

All of this explains why Donald Trump has turned China into his favorite bogeyman, constantly invoking the country to try to justify his colonialist policies.

During his inauguration speech in January 2025, Trump declared that the United States is going to take over the Panama Canal, in a [blatant act of colonialism](#).

"China is operating the Panama Canal. And we didn't give it to China; we gave it to Panama. And we're taking it back", Trump claimed.

It is not true that China is operating the Panama Canal. This is utterly false.

Nonetheless, Secretary of State Marco Rubio has used the same rhetoric.

In January, [Rubio spoke with the conservative talk show host Megyn Kelly](#), in his first official interview as U.S. secretary of state.

In this hour-long discussion, Rubio mentioned the words “China” or “Chinese” 65 times.

“China wants to be the most powerful country in the world and they want to do so at our expense, and that’s not in our national interest, and we’re going to address it”, he lamented.

When asked why the Trump administration wants to control the Panama Canal, Rubio echoed Trump, falsely arguing that China is controlling it.

The way that Trump and Marco Rubio see the world is that [the U.S. empire has a sphere of influence](#), and they want to reassert U.S. imperial control over the Western Hemisphere, and especially Latin America.

That is why they are threatening Greenland, Panama, Canada, Mexico, Colombia, and more. This is also why [Trump allies](#) are constantly invoking the [colonialist Monroe Doctrine](#).

### **U.S. Vice President JD Vance targets China**

When it comes to Europe, the Trump administration’s view is basically that Ukraine is not in the U.S. imperial sphere of influence, and that Europe has to deal with Russia on its own terms.

This was the message that U.S. Vice President JD Vance conveyed in his speech at the Munich Security Conference in February 2025.

[Vance pressured Europe to reduce its relations with China](#). He portrayed Beijing as a so-called “authoritarian master that seeks to infiltrate, dig in and seize your information infrastructure”.

Instead of using resources in Europe, the Trump administration wants to focus the attention of the U.S. empire on China.

Like Trump, Vance exploits “populist” rhetoric, but both seek to expand U.S. imperial power, and are willing to promote aggressive interventionist policies.

To understand Vance’s worldview, [CNN interviewed Alexander Gray](#), who served as chief of staff of the National Security Council in Trump’s first term.

[Gray is a neoconservative Republican](#) who continues to defend Trump. He supports Trump’s attempts to colonize Greenland and the Panama Canal.

CNN reported (emphasis added):

*Gray said that Vance’s foreign policy worldview stems from his military service in Iraq and what he sees as the failures of American entanglements abroad. But he also noted that **Vance supports an aggressive approach toward China and does not just want the U.S. to retreat from the world stage altogether.***

*“That worldview is about making hard choices with limited resources and **devoting our resources to what is an existential threat with China**,” Gray said. “**He’s not for abdicating U.S. global leadership**; he’s not for stepping back from the U.S. being a muscular power on the world stage.”*

## **Brzezinski warned of an “anti-hegemonic coalition” of China, Russia, and Iran**

Washington’s fears of an alliance between China and Russia go back decades.

The influential U.S. imperial strategist Zbigniew Brzezinski, a fervent anti-communist cold warrior who served as national security advisor to President Jimmy Carter, published a book in 1997 called *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*.

In this work, Brzezinski discussed tactics that the U.S. empire could use to try to maintain its global unipolar dominance. He also warned of potential challenges to U.S. hegemony.

“The most dangerous scenario” for the U.S. empire, Brzezinski wrote, “would be a grand coalition of China, Russia, and perhaps Iran, an ‘antihegemonic’ coalition united not by ideology but by complementary grievances”.

The relevant passage from Brzezinski’s book follows (emphasis added):

*Finally, some possible contingencies involving future political alignments should also be briefly noted, subject to fuller discussion in pertinent chapters. In the past, international affairs were largely dominated by contests among individual states for regional domination. Henceforth, **the United States may have to determine how to cope with regional coalitions that seek to push America out of Eurasia, thereby threatening America’s status as a global power**. However, whether any such coalitions do or do not arise to challenge American primacy will in fact depend to a very large degree on how effectively the United States responds to the major dilemmas identified here.*

*Potentially, **the most dangerous scenario would be a grand coalition of China, Russia, and perhaps Iran, an “antihegemonic” coalition united not by ideology but by complementary grievances**. It would be **reminiscent in scale and scope of the challenge once posed by the Sino-Soviet bloc**, though this time China would likely be the leader and Russia the follower. Averting this contingency, however remote it may be, will require a display of U.S. geostrategic*

*skill on the western, eastern, and southern perimeters of Eurasia simultaneously.*

This is exactly what has happened in the past few decades. The aggressive policies of the U.S. empire, including wars, sanctions, and regime-change operations, have pushed Beijing, Moscow, and Tehran together.

China, Russia, and Iran are members of BRICS, the Global South-led organization that continues to grow every year.

[BRICS now represents roughly 55% of the world population](#) and 42% of global GDP, measured at purchasing power parity.

This is why Trump has repeatedly threatened to destroy BRICS, and vowed to impose 100% tariffs on members of the group.

It is not just BRICS, however. China, Russia, and Iran are also members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which seeks to maintain security and stability in Eurasia.

### **China: 10 times Russia's population, 5.5 times its economy, 17 times its manufacturing output**

China has not fought in a war since 1979 and has a strict non-interventionist foreign policy. Nonetheless, U.S. imperial strategists fear Beijing, because it is significantly more powerful than Russia, and even than the former Soviet Union was at its peak.

To start, China has 1.4 billion people, which is roughly 10 times the size of Russia's population, of around 140 million.

China also has the world's largest economy. When you measure [China's GDP at purchasing power parity](#), it overtook the United States in 2016, according to IMF data.

As of the end of 2024, China represents a bit over 19% of the world economy, compared to just under 15% for the United States.

Russia is a major economy, but it is only about 3.5% of world GDP. That means that China's economy is roughly 5.5 times larger than Russia's.

Russia's economy is similar in size to the economies of Indonesia or Brazil, which are very important countries with large populations. But China is at a whole different level.

Russia has enormous reserves of natural resources, and is one of the world's top producers of oil, natural gas, critical minerals, grains, and fertilizer. It is also a major military power, with advanced weapons technologies.

When it comes to manufacturing output, however, there is no comparison. [China is by far the world's leading manufacturing power.](#)

China represented 31% of global manufacturing value added in 2022, according to UN data.

The U.S. made up 16%, compared to just 1.8% for Russia.

Russia's manufacturing output was a bit lower than Mexico's, and slightly larger than that of Italy and France.

When it comes to technology, China is the world leader.

The Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), a hawkish anti-China think tank that is backed by Australia's military and [funded](#) by the Australian government, U.S. State Department, UK Foreign Office, and European Parliament, has frequently fearmongered about China's rapid technological progress.

In a 2024 report, ASPI lamented that "China has strengthened its global research

lead", and is ahead of the rest of the world in [57 of 64 critical technologies](#), representing 89% of the total.

China made an enormous leap forward from 20 years before, when it led in only three technologies.

The ASPI report complained that scholars in China now publish more articles in research journals than those of any other country, and engineers and scientists in China apply for more patents than any other nation by far.

China is the only country with large technological firms that can [challenge U.S. Big Tech monopolies in Silicon Valley](#).

This is why the U.S. government has sought to sabotage and ban Chinese technology companies, such as Huawei, TikTok (owned by Chinese firm ByteDance), and [DeepSeek, the transformative AI company](#).

Most fundamentally of all, U.S. officials see China as a threat because it poses a systemic challenge to US-led capitalism.

China has a socialist system, led by a communist party, and it has made enormous progress in recent decades, [lifting approximately 800 million people out of poverty](#). This represented nearly three-quarters of global extreme poverty reduction, according to the World Bank.

[China's GDP \(PPP\)](#) increased by 75 times from 1984 to 2024, based on IMF data. In the same time period, U.S. GDP rose by seven times.

Meanwhile, it is clear to the world that China continues to grow at a steady rate, whereas the United States faces serious decline, with extreme inequality, severe homelessness, soaring poverty, widespread addiction, mounting debts, and increasing economic and political instability.

This is why Trump complained, "We are a nation in very serious decline."

Trump hopes that by trying to divide Russia and China, he can weaken Beijing, reverse U.S. decline, and save the U.S. empire.

Source: [geopoliticaeconomy.com](https://geopoliticaeconomy.com)



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## **The demise of USAID: Few regrets in Latin America**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
March 14, 2025



"Take your money with you," [said](#) Colombia's President Gustavo Petro, when told about Trump's plans to cut aid to Latin America, "it's poison."

USAID (US Agency for International Development) spends around \$2 billion annually in Latin America, which is only 5% of its global budget. The temporarily closed-down agency's future looks bleak, while reactions to its money being cut have been wide-ranging. Only a few were as strong as Petro's and many condemned the move. For example, WOLA (the Washington Office on Latin America), a leading "liberal" think tank which routinely runs cover for Washington's regime-change efforts, [called it](#) Trump's "America Last" policy.

While USAID does some good – such as [removing landmines](#) in Vietnam (themselves a product of US wrongdoing) – as an agency of the world's hegemon, its fundamental role is aligned with projecting US world dominance.

Not unexpectedly, the corporate media have largely come to the rescue of USAID. They try to give the impression that they are mainly concerned that some countries would be badly effected by its loss. In fact, the follow-the-flag media understand that USAID is part of the imperial toolkit.

Both the [Los Angeles Times](#) and [Bloomberg](#) suggested that USAID's shutdown would

“open the door” to China. The *Associated Press* [described](#) the withdrawal of aid as a “huge setback” for the region; the *BBC* [echoed](#) these sentiments. The *NYT* and other mainstream media point to the irony that many of its programs [help stem](#) outward migration from Latin America, an issue which is otherwise at the top of Trump’s agenda.

## Weaponization of humanitarian aid

The corporate media, not surprisingly, give a one-sided picture. It’s true, of course, that an aspect of USAID’s work is humanitarian. But, as Jeffrey Sachs [explained](#), “true, and urgent, humanitarian aid” was only one element in a larger “soft power” strategy. From its inception, USAID’s mission was more than humanitarian.

A year after President John Kennedy created USAID in 1961, he [told](#) its directors that “as we do not want to send American troops to a great many areas where freedom may be under attack, we send you.”

The organization is “an instrument of [US] foreign policy …a completely politicized institution,” According to Sachs. It has mainly benefitted US allies as with the program to limit hurricane damage in Central America, cited by the [NYT](#) which omits Nicaragua, hit by two devastating storms in 2020. Needless to say, Nicaragua is not a US ally.

Although USAID provides about 42% of all humanitarian aid globally, the [Quixote Center](#) reports that most of the funds are spent on delivering US-produced food supplies or on paying US contractors, rather than helping local markets and encouraging local providers. The Quixote Center argues that “a review of USAID is needed,” though not the type of review which Trump or Elon Musk probably have in mind.

Indeed, the dumping of subsidized US food products undermines the recipient

country's own agriculturalists. While hunger may be assuaged in the short-term, the long-term effect is to create dependency, which is the implicit purpose of such aid in the first place. In short, the US globally does not promote independence but seeks to enmesh countries in perpetual relations of dependence.

## **Regime change**

The third and most controversial element, identified by Sachs, is that USAID has become a “deep state institution,” which explicitly promotes regime change. He notes that it encourages so-called “[color revolutions](#)” or [coups](#), aimed at replacing governments that fail to serve US interests.

The State Department is sometimes quite open about this. When a would-be ambassador to Nicaragua was [questioned](#) by the US Senate in July 2022, he made clear that he would work with USAID-supported groups both within and outside the country who are opposed to Nicaragua’s government. It is hardly surprising that Nicaragua refused to accept his appointment. The progressive government has since [closed down](#) groups receiving regime-change funding.

The history of US regime-change efforts in Latin America is a long one, much of it attributable to covert operations by the CIA. But since 1990, USAID and associated bodies like the National Endowment for Democracy have come to play a huge role. For example, they have spent at least [\\$300 million](#) since 1990 in trying to undermine the Cuban Revolution.

Regime-change efforts in Cuba involved a vast organization known as [Creative Associates International](#)(CREA), later shown by [Alan MacLeod](#) to be directing similar USAID programs across Latin America. Currently, CREA is working in [Honduras](#) whose progressive government is under considerable pressure from the US government. Yet CREA is only one of [25 contractors](#) which, in 2024, earned sums ranging from \$32 million to a whopping \$1.56 billion.

## Culture wars

USAID's regime-change work often foster ostensibly non-political cultural, artistic, gender-based or educational NGOs whose real agenda is to inculcate anti-government or pro-US attitudes. Examples proliferate.

In Cuba, USAID [infiltrated](#) the hip-hop scene, attempted to create [a local version](#) of Twitter, and recruited youngsters from Costa Rica, Peru and Venezuela to go to Cuba to run [a particularly inept](#) project that risked putting them in jail.

In Venezuela, USAID [began work](#) after the unsuccessful US-backed coup attempt against President Hugo Chávez in 2002. By 2007, it was supporting [360 groups](#), some of them overtly training potential "democratic leaders." The Venezuelan rock band Rawayana, recent winners of a Grammy, are [funded by USAID](#) to convey pro-opposition messages in their public appearances.

In Nicaragua, after the Sandinista government returned to power in 2007, USAID set up [training programs](#), reaching up to 5,000 young people. Many of those who were trained then joined in a coup attempt in 2018.

## Astroturf human rights and media organizations

Another tactic is to undermine political leaders seen as US enemies. In 2004, USAID [funded](#) 379 Bolivian organizations with the aim of "reinforcing regional governments" and weakening the progressive national government.

It did [similar work](#) in Venezuela, including in 2007 holding a conference with 50 local mayors to discuss "decentralisation" and creating "popular networks" to oppose President Chávez and, later, President Nicolás Maduro. USAID even expended \$116 million [supporting](#) the self-declared "interim presidency" of Juan Guaidó.

In a similar vein, Nicaragua was the subject of a USAID program intended to attack the credibility of its [2021 election](#). Likewise, after the election of Xiomara Castro in Honduras, USAID set up a [democratic governance program](#) to “hold the government to account.”

Creating or sustaining compliant “human rights” organizations is also a key part of USAID’s work. Of the \$400 million it spends in Colombia each year, half goes to such bodies. In Venezuela, where USAID spends \$200 million annually, part goes to opposition-focused “human rights” groups such as [Provea](#). USAID funded all three of the opposition-focused “human rights” groups in Nicaragua, before they were [closed down](#), and now probably supports them in exile, in Costa Rica.

Finally, USAID creates or sustains opposition media which, as Sachs put it, “spring up on demand” when a government is targeted to be overthrown. Reporters without Frontiers (RSF, by its French initials) [reported](#): “Trump’s foreign aid freeze throws journalism around the world into chaos.” It revealed that USAID was funding over 6,200 journalists across 707 media outlets. In the run-up to the 2018 coup attempt in Nicaragua, USAID was supporting all the key opposition media outlets.

RSF, while purporting to support “independent journalism,” itself is [funded](#) by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), George Soros’s Open Society Foundations, and the European Union – hardly neutral parties.

## **Few regrets**

This is why there may be few regrets about the demise of USAID in Latin America among governments beleaguered by the US. Indeed, opposition groups in [Venezuela](#) and [Nicaragua](#) admit they are in “crisis” following the cuts to their funding.

Even Trump’s ally President Nayib Bukele is [skeptical](#) about USAID: “While

marketed as support for development, democracy, and human rights, the majority of these funds are funneled into opposition groups, NGOs with political agendas, and destabilizing movements.”

The evidence that USAID has weaponized so-called humanitarian aid is incontestable. Yet, according to US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, it is the Latin American countries that Washington has targeted for regime change - Nicaragua, Cuba, and Venezuela - who are “[enemies of humanity](#).” In response, Venezuelan Foreign Minister Yvan Gil [retorted](#) that the “only enemies of humanity are those who, with their war machinery and abuse, have spent decades sowing chaos and misery in half the world.”

Regrettably, USAID has been a contributor to this abuse, rather than opposing it. While temporarily shuttered at USAID, the empire’s regime-change mission will with near certainty continue, though in other and perhaps less overt forms.

*Nicaragua-based **John Perry** is with the [Nicaragua Solidarity Coalition](#) and writes for the London Review of Books, FAIR, and CovertAction. **Roger D. Harris** is with the [Task Force on the Americas](#), the [US Peace Council](#), and the [Venezuela Solidarity Network](#).*

Source: [Resumen Latinoamericano - English](#)



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# USAID: the Empire reinvents itself

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 14, 2025

Elon Musk, sworn in as Secretary for Government Efficiency, thundered: "The time has come for USAID to die." His words resonated like the harbinger of an imminent storm. Shortly afterwards, Donald Trump, on his first day back in the White House, ordered the suspension of almost all US foreign assistance for three months, especially that of the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

The closure was abrupt and forceful: dozens of senior officials were sent on forced leave, thousands of contractors were laid off and the USAID headquarters in Washington closed its doors without warning. As if they had never existed, the agency's website and its X account disappeared from the digital world, leaving behind a vacuum that was soon filled with speculation and rumors on the Internet.

The confusion increased when, from the Dominican Republic and at the end of his first tour of Latin America, the Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, announced that his department would take over the functions that the agency had been performing until then. Rubio, appointed as acting administrator of USAID, assured that Washington's

foreign aid would continue, but with one condition: “It must make sense and align with our national interests.”

This move, which some want to see as a mere administrative restructuring, is a strategic shift that augurs profound changes in US foreign policy aimed at greater efficiency and new repressive measures. The aim is not to park the objectives of the agency recognized as a front for the CIA, but quite the opposite, to adjust them and perfect the empire’s system of international influence. As Dr. Vergerus would say in Igmar Bergman’s film *Das schlangenei*, “anyone can see the future here, it’s like a snake’s egg. Through the thin membrane you can make out a reptile already formed”.

USAID, born in 1961 during the *Cold War*, had become a colossus of interference, covert operations and destabilization networks. While doing charity work in some countries, they tried to dismantle any opposition to Washington’s allies. It has also been the scene of scandalous cases of corruption. Without going any further, last week the Federal Bureau of Investigation revealed that it is investigating Juan Guaidó, the short-lived interim president of Venezuela, and his ambassador in Washington, Carlos Vecchio, for embezzling one billion dollars, managed between 2018 and 2020 under the guise of “humanitarian aid”. These funds, channeled through USAID, vanished in a whirlwind of opaque spending.

In the case of Cuba, the covert program known as ZunZuneo, the failed “Cuban Twitter,” is notorious. Funded by USAID and designed to stoke “dissidence” on the island. Millions of dollars were funneled into shell companies, while violating the legislation of several countries, including that of the US.

Trump, pragmatic and ruthless, seems to have understood that USAID’s covert operations are not only ineffective on the ground, but also difficult to control and counterproductive. It is foreseeable that the millions of dollars that fed these failed operations will be redirected towards more subtle and effective channels. For

example, they will cease to flow to Spanish-language propaganda websites operating out of Florida which, although useful for spreading toxic content against Havana on social networks, lack the legitimacy and reach necessary to reach US public opinion.

It is likely that the money will be allocated to media and spokespersons with greater weight in US and international public opinion. It will also go to the coffers of private contractors, as analysts warn. In a sort of "Gattopardism", the "regime change" programs do not disappear with USAID's subordination to the State Department, but rather the immoralities of the interventionist and anti-democratic methodologies of USAID and other international "aid" agencies will deepen the control of the "deep state" and the austerity policies of the new Trump administration.

The closure of USAID and the transfer of its functions to the State Department are more than a bureaucratic maneuver. It is the prelude to a more aggressive foreign policy, more aligned with the interests of the ultra-conservative sectors of the US, and much more refined in communicational and political terms. In this new scenario, the manipulation of information and the use of funds to promote ideological agendas could intensify, with direct consequences in countries such as Cuba, where the media battle is just another aspect of the economic, financial and diplomatic blockade that the island has endured for decades.

Thus, the disappearance of USAID marks the end of an era, but also the beginning of a new phase in US interference, more sophisticated, more covert and, perhaps, more dangerous.

Source: [La Jornada](#), translation [Resumen Latinoamericano - English](#)



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# **Rubens Paiva: Presente! How ‘I’m Still Here’ challenges Brazil’s resurgent far-right**

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 14, 2025

The commercial and critical success of the 2024 film “I’m Still Here” represents a triumph for the Brazilian people. Directed by Walter Salles, the movie is based on the 2015 book of the same name written by Rubens Paiva’s son, Marcelo Rubens Paiva.

The film narrates the story of Rubens Paiva’s “disappearance” from the perspective of his wife, Eunice Paiva. If you spend time in the film corner of social media, you might have seen the enthusiasm of Brazilians with the international success of the movie, being the first Brazilian film to be nominated for Best Picture at the Academy Awards.

Set in the scenic Leblon neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro in 1971, the movie tells a

story well-known to many Brazilians. Rubens Paiva is one of the few martyrs from the U.S.-backed right-wing military dictatorship whose name has endured despite right-wing efforts to erase it from public memory. In schools, Paiva's story was taught as an example of the senseless cruelty inflicted by the military dictatorship on the Brazilian people, alongside others such as Vladimir Herzog and Stuart Angel.

Rubens Paiva, a former congressman of the Brazilian Labor Party (PTB) and a civil engineer, was taken from his family home by armed men. His wife Eunice and 15-year-old daughter Vera were also taken. While Vera returned home after 24 hours, and Eunice was only released after 12 days of detention, Rubens Paiva never came home, and his remains were never found.

In 2014, a bust of Rubens Paiva was unveiled in the House of Representatives in Brasília. This was a poignant tribute to a man who had been "disappeared" by the right-wing dictatorship. During a small ceremony attended by Paiva's surviving family members, Congressman Jair Bolsonaro left his office and approached the gathering. He shouted, "Rubens Paiva got what he deserved, disgraced communist, bum!" Paiva's nephew, Chico Paiva Avelino, later recounted in a Facebook post that Bolsonaro spat on the bust before walking away.

This incident marked the first time I heard about the man who would later become Brazil's president. I remember being shocked by his blatant disrespect for the family members of someone I considered a hero. How could someone be so crass? I was certain his behavior would be deemed unacceptable by people across the political spectrum.

By 2018, when Bolsonaro won the presidential election, he had shown what Avelino described as an "obsession" with Rubens Paiva. Bolsonaro vehemently opposed investigating the cases of those who were "disappeared" by the military dictatorship and consistently blamed Rubens Paiva's death on the political left.

Since Bolsonaro's election, nostalgic sentiment for the repressive military dictatorship that ruled Brazil from 1964 to 1985 has only intensified. The shock I initially felt at the crass attitude of a minor political figure in 2014 has now permeated the country. Brazilians are grappling with the reality of a significant political faction that claims the country was better during the dictatorship and advocates for the reinstatement of military rule.

At the time, the military justified his disappearance with the same excuse Bolsonaro would later claim to be true: that Paiva had been rescued from detention by left-wing comrades. Only decades later, in 1996, did the truth surface through the National Truth Commission, which investigated the crimes of the military dictatorship; it was revealed that the former congressman had died due to injuries related to torture on the second day of his imprisonment. His wife fought courageously and tirelessly for the truth.

The story told in "I'm Still Here" is not exactly the entire account of Rubens and Eunice Paiva's lives or all of the oppression exerted by the military during the dictatorship. But it presents the experience of Eunice Paiva through her husband's disappearance and her strength to deal with its aftermath. It is brilliantly portrayed by Fernanda Torres — nominated for Best Actress at the Academy Awards and Brazil's favorite nepobaby (her mother, Fernanda Montenegro, was also nominated for the same award 25 years ago for the movie "Central Station," also directed by Walter Salles).

Brazilians are celebrating the success of "I'm Still Here" with good reason. The film portrays a true story from a period of oppression that should not evoke nostalgia. It serves as a powerful reminder of how dangerously close Brazil came to experiencing another right-wing military coup when Bolsonaro took power in 2018. It reminds us that, as the film's theme song suggests, we must remain vigilant, for danger always lurks around the corner.

“I’m Still Here” is currently playing in theaters everywhere in the United States.

For further reading on the role the United States played in the Brazilian military dictatorship, see Vincent Bevins’s [I’m Still Here](#).



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## **Trump has a special hatred for Africa and people of African descent**

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Within the first three weeks of his second presidential administration, Trump’s crimes have included:

- Fascist round-ups of immigrant workers, with hundreds being deported in military aircraft while being shackled. Trump is setting up a concentration camp for immigrants in Guantánamo on land stolen from Cuba.
- Trump launched a storm of anti-trans attacks, radically removing trans

people's rights, banning gender identity from all official documents such as passports, banning transgender women and girls from participating in women's sports, and restricting or even eliminating gender-affirming care.

- Menaced Colombia with a trade war when Colombia's President Gustavo Petro protested the mistreatment of Colombian immigrants.
- Trump is seeking to take over Greenland, annex Canada, and is threatening to invade Panama. Thousands of U.S. troops have been sent to the Mexican border. Trump has ridiculously ordered renaming the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America.
- Now, Trump wants to seize Gaza and kick out two million Palestinians who have survived 15 months of genocide.
- Yet, with all of his attacks on Latin America and Palestine, the first country that Trump bombed was the African country of Somalia.

Trump has a special hatred for Africa and all Black people. He wants to turn back the clock to the days of undisguised white supremacy.

On his [second day](#) in office, Trump rescinded President Lyndon Johnson's 1965 executive order banning discrimination in hiring by the federal government and its private contractors. [Washington Post](#) columnist Karen Attiah has rightfully called Trump's campaign against Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), an effort at resegregation.

Trump's attendance at the Super Bowl depends on the message "[End Racism](#)" being removed from the end zone.

Darren Beattie — Trump's pick to be the State Department's Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs — is an open bigot.

[Beattie wrote](#) on X: "Competent white men must be in charge if you want things to work. Unfortunately, our entire national ideology is predicated on coddling the

feelings of women and minorities, and demoralizing competent white men.”

## **The apartheid connection**

Donald Trump’s entire life as the offspring of a real estate mogul has been coated with bigotry. Trump and his daddy were sued by the U.S. government in 1973 for refusing to rent to Black people.

Trump took out full-page newspaper ads when five innocent Black and Latinx youths were framed for assault in the 1989 “Central Park” case. Trump has never apologized, even though the Exonerated Five were freed after years in jail and compensated.

One of the five, [Yusef Salaam](#), has been elected to the New York City Council.

On Feb. 3, Trump condemned South Africa for a law that has taken small amounts of land from whites. Thirty years after the fall of apartheid, whites still control 70% of land in South Africa, all of it stolen from Africans.

[Trump whined](#) on his Truth Social account that “South Africa is confiscating land, and treating certain classes of people VERY BADLY.” The term “certain classes” means white settlers.

Trump is now [suspending](#) all U.S. aid to South Africa, most of which funds HIV/AIDS prevention efforts. That’s as genocidal as the U.S.-made bombs that killed thousands in Gaza.

Fox News and all fascists call any efforts at land justice in South Africa to be “White Genocide.” During Trump’s first administration, two pro-apartheid white farmers from South Africa — [Kallie Kriel and Ernst Roets](#) — met with National Security Advisor John Bolton.

Kriel and Roets also [met with](#) United States Agency for International Development (USAID) officials. This shows how this agency, which is being shut down by the Trump regime, was about U.S. domination, not helping people.

Elon Musk — Donald Trump's virtual co-president — is the son of an apartheid-era emerald mine owner. Musk also attacked the land law, as did Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

Vice President JD Vance's mentor is the billionaire [Peter Thiel](#), who was brought up under apartheid. Thiel's millions in campaign contributions were vital in electing Vance as a U.S. Senator from Ohio.

Alongside Trump's attacks on immigrants, Palestinians, and Black people are his vicious attacks on transgender people. Bigotry hurts all poor and working people.

Trump & Co. want to return to the days before the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, which helped smash open colonial rule. Millions of people need to come out in the streets — as we did during the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020 — to stop this fascist regime.

