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U.S. Foreign Policy in the Western Hemisphere: Issues for Congress

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U.S. Foreign Policy in the Western Hemisphere: Issues for Congress

Historically, many U.S. policymakers have regarded the Western Hemisphere as a U.S. sphere of influence, vital to U.S. interests, or both. U.S. engagement in the region has shifted over time, responding to changes in the hemisphere and in U.S. objectives. Following the end of the Cold War, the U.S. approach to the Western Hemisphere primarily sought to promote democracy and human rights, reduce barriers to trade, and combat transnational security threats.

The second Trump Administration has identified the Western Hemisphere as a priority for U.S. foreign and defense policy. The Administration has begun to implement potentially far-reaching changes to U.S. relations with Latin American and Caribbean countries; Canada; and Greenland, a self-governing part of the Kingdom of Denmark, with some variation by country.

- **Competition with China and Russia.** The Administration has placed renewed emphasis on limiting the influence of extra-hemispheric powers in the Western Hemisphere. This approach has included U.S. efforts to secure or enhance access to locations the Administration deems strategic, such as the Panama Canal and Greenland, and to prevent competitors from controlling critical infrastructure in the region.
- **Counternarcotics and Transnational Crime.** The Administration has increased the U.S. military's involvement in combating illicit narcotics and addressing related security challenges. This approach has included designating transnational criminal organizations as terrorists, conducting unilateral lethal strikes on suspected drug traffickers, and executing the January 2026 U.S. military capture of then-Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro.
- **Migration Policy.** The Administration has focused extensively on stemming unauthorized immigration into the United States and removing unauthorized immigrants from the country. Among other actions, the Administration has imposed new restrictions at the border, ended humanitarian protections that had provided relief from removal for some immigrants in the United States, and negotiated agreements with governments to accept increased repatriations and third-country migrants from the United States.
- **Trade Policy.** The Administration has implemented tariffs on imports from Western Hemisphere countries—including free-trade-agreement partners—tied to various economic, security, and political goals. The Administration also has pursued bilateral trade negotiations to lower foreign tariffs and nontariff barriers and to potentially expand Western Hemisphere supply chains in strategic sectors.
- **Political Engagement.** The Administration has scaled back democracy assistance in Latin America and the Caribbean while offering support to some politically aligned leaders in the hemisphere. The Administration also has increased U.S. pressure on the authoritarian governments of Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua, while sometimes prioritizing economic or other U.S. objectives over democracy and human rights.

Western Hemisphere governments have reacted to these policy shifts in various ways. Some governments have fully embraced the Trump Administration's approach, adopted similar policies, and sought to collaborate more closely with the U.S. government. Other governments have demonstrated a willingness to negotiate with the Trump Administration and cooperate in certain areas while rebuffing the Administration in others. U.S. actions perceived to threaten Western Hemisphere countries' economic interests and sovereignty, such as levying tariffs, imposing sanctions, and threatening to use unilateral U.S. military force, appear to have generated particular pushback and contributed to some countries seeking to bolster ties with other partners.

For the most part, the 119th Congress has not directly authorized or codified the second Trump Administration's policy shifts in the Western Hemisphere, nor has it enacted various measures introduced by some Members to oppose or block elements of the Administration's approach to the region. Congress has taken some steps to monitor and shape U.S. policy, enacting Western Hemisphere-specific reporting requirements, directives, and appropriations in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 (P.L. 119-60) and the National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2026 (P.L. 119-75, Division F), among other legislation (see **Appendix**). Congress also has held hearings and engaged in other oversight to examine the Administration's approach to the hemisphere and particular issues. Congress may explore various other options to influence U.S. policy in the region, depending on its goals.

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Introduction

For much of U.S. history, many U.S. policymakers have regarded the Western Hemisphere (**Figure 1**) as a U.S. sphere of influence, vital to U.S. interests, or both.¹ The extent to which U.S. policymakers have focused on the region, however, has varied, waxing and waning in relation to perceived threats to U.S. national security. During the Cold War, for example, the U.S. government implemented significant development assistance and security cooperation efforts and engaged in covert operations, among other initiatives, to counter Soviet and Cuban influence in Latin America and the Caribbean. After the Cold War, and particularly after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, U.S. Administrations and Congresses arguably placed less emphasis on the Western Hemisphere when formulating broad foreign policy goals or allocating resources. At the same time, the U.S. government maintained political and economic engagement with the region, seeking to promote democracy and human rights, expand trade and investment ties, and forge partnerships to combat transnational crime and other security threats.

Some U.S. policymakers, including in Congress, have begun to reassess the U.S. approach to the Western Hemisphere. They are responding in part to the region’s expanding engagement with the People’s Republic of China (PRC, or China), the evolution of criminal organizations in the region and their involvement in the U.S. opioid overdose epidemic, mass migration flows from and through the region, and potential economic opportunities in the region related to critical minerals and other strategic sectors. In 2024, Congress enacted the Western Hemisphere Partnership Act (P.L. 118-159, Division E, Title LI, Subtitle B), which states that it “is the policy of the United States to promote economic competitiveness, democratic governance, and security in the Western Hemisphere.” Among other provisions, the act outlines actions U.S. agencies “should” take to promote security, the rule of law, digitalization, cybersecurity, economic and commercial partnerships, transparency, and democratic governance in the region.

The second Trump Administration’s 2025 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (NSS) asserts that it aims to “restore American preeminence” in the Western Hemisphere “after years of neglect.”² According to the NSS, the Administration intends to work with partners in the region to “control migration, stop drug flows, and strengthen stability and security,” while seeking to bolster the United States’ appeal as “the Hemisphere’s economic and security partner of choice.”³ In comparison to its predecessors over the past 30 years, the second Trump Administration’s approach to the region has placed more emphasis on halting migration flows and limiting the influence of extra-hemispheric powers; shifted away from the promotion of democracy and free trade; and relied more on hard power tools, including U.S. military force and tariffs, to advance its objectives.

The U.S. Constitution divides foreign policy powers between the President and Congress, and the trajectory of U.S. policy in the Western Hemisphere may depend, in part, on interactions between the two branches.⁴ The 119th Congress has enacted or considered various measures with the potential to influence U.S. policy in the region (see **Appendix**). Moving forward, Congress may

¹ See, for example, President James Monroe, “Seventh Annual Message,” December 2, 1823; President Theodore Roosevelt, “Fourth Annual Message,” December 6, 1904; President John F. Kennedy, “Address at a White House Reception for Members of Congress and the Diplomatic Corps of the Latin American Republics,” March 13, 1961; and President Ronald Reagan, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on Central America,” April 27, 1983.

² White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, November 2025, p. 15.

³ White House, *National Security Strategy*, p. 16.

⁴ See CRS In Focus IF12858, *Congress and National Security: Selected Tools and Issues for the 119th Congress*, coordinated by Christopher M. Blanchard.

continue to monitor and assess the results of the Administration’s approach to the region. It also may deliberate whether—and, if so, how—to continue shaping U.S. policy in the Western Hemisphere as it considers proposals to authorize and fund diplomatic, foreign assistance, military, and trade policy initiatives.

Figure 1. Map of the Western Hemisphere



Source: Created by CRS using data from the U.S. Department of State.

Note: Some European territories in the Caribbean and North Atlantic Ocean are not labeled due to space limitations.

Competition with China and Russia

Limiting the influence of extra-hemispheric powers in the Western Hemisphere has been a tenet of U.S. policy since the articulation of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 (see **text box**, “The Monroe Doctrine”) and was the predominant focus of U.S. policy in the region throughout the Cold War. U.S. concerns about extra-hemispheric influence in the Western Hemisphere declined during the 1990s and early 2000s but have increased over the past decade, largely in response to the PRC’s expanded engagement with the region. Such ties have been primarily economic, with China surpassing the United States as the top trade partner of some South American countries and emerging as an important source of foreign investment and development financing for some Latin American and Caribbean countries.⁵ U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) and U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) have expressed concerns that PRC activities in the Arctic and investments in and around the hemisphere’s critical infrastructure and strategic locations—including deepwater ports, telecommunications networks, space facilities, and the Panama Canal—could support PRC military objectives.⁶ Russia’s relations with Western Hemisphere countries are more limited, though U.S. military leaders have expressed concerns about Russia’s Arctic activities and its ties to authoritarian regimes in the region.⁷

The Monroe Doctrine

In his 1823 message to Congress, President James Monroe (1817-1825) asserted that the United States sought no involvement in European affairs, that there should be no further European colonization of the Americas, and that the United States would consider any efforts by European powers to reassert their autocratic political systems over the independent republics of the Western Hemisphere a threat to U.S. security. Subsequent U.S. policymakers adopted varying interpretations of this “Monroe Doctrine.” Perhaps most prominently, in a 1904 message to Congress, President Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909) asserted a U.S. right to unilaterally intervene in other Western Hemisphere countries to protect U.S. interests and deter foreign aggression (the “Roosevelt Corollary” to the Monroe Doctrine). Between 1904 and 1933, the U.S. government deployed armed forces to Latin America and the Caribbean 27 times, including extended occupations of Nicaragua (1912-1925; 1926-1933), Haiti (1915-1934), and the Dominican Republic (1916-1924).

Due in part to backlash to these deployments, both in the region and in the United States, President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933-1945) renounced unilateral U.S. intervention in the region and adopted a more cooperative approach to hemispheric relations (the “Good Neighbor Policy”). This policy shift set the stage for a series of multilateral agreements that enshrined nonintervention and collective self-defense against external threats as regional norms. These agreements include the Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (1933), the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (1947), and the Charter of the Organization of American States (1948), each of which the United States ratified with the advice and consent of the U.S. Senate. Nevertheless, U.S. policymakers have continued to invoke the Monroe Doctrine intermittently to advocate particular U.S. actions in the region (e.g., P.L. 87-733 and H.Res. 560 [89th Congress]).

Sources: President James Monroe, “Seventh Annual Message,” December 2, 1823; President Theodore Roosevelt, “Fourth Annual Message,” December 6, 1904; CRS Report R42738, *Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2023*, by Barbara Salazar Torreon and Sofia Plagakis; Max Paul Friedman and

⁵ For more information, see CRS In Focus IF10982, *China’s Engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean*, by Ricardo Barrios and Karla I. Rios.

⁶ U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM), “Statement of General Gregory M. Guillot, United States Air Force, Commander, United States Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command, Before the House Armed Services Committee,” April 1, 2025, pp. 17-19; and U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), “Statement of Admiral Alvin Holsey, Commander, United States Southern Command, Before the 119th Congress, Senate Armed Services Committee,” February 13, 2025, pp. 4-6.

⁷ NORTHCOM, “Statement of General Gregory M. Guillot”; and SOUTHCOM, “Statement of Admiral Alvin Holsey.”

Tom Long, "Soft Balancing in the Americas: Latin American Opposition to U.S. Intervention, 1898-1936," *International Security*, Summer 2015, pp. 135-152.

Consecutive U.S. Administrations and some Members of Congress have warned Western Hemisphere partners that their ties to the PRC could make them susceptible to economic coercion and may compromise their security. Although the Canadian government has taken steps to restrict PRC influence inside Canada, Latin American and Caribbean governments generally have downplayed U.S. concerns and welcomed PRC capital flows and technology.⁸ Similarly, although most Latin American and Caribbean governments condemned Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine, they have opted not to join the United States, Canada, and European countries in leveling sanctions against Russia or transferring military equipment to Ukraine.⁹ This apparent desire to avoid entanglement in U.S. competition with China and Russia may stem, in part, from the region's experiences during the Cold War, when U.S.-Soviet rivalry contributed to civil conflicts, military coups, and widespread human rights violations in the region.¹⁰ It also may reflect a view among some leaders in the region that they may be better able to advance their national interests by remaining open to cooperation with a range of partners rather than by aligning with a single power.¹¹

Second Trump Administration Approach and Regional Response

The second Trump Administration's 2025 NSS states that the United States will "assert and enforce a 'Trump Corollary' to the Monroe Doctrine."¹² According to the strategy, this is to include denying "non-Hemispheric competitors the ability to position forces or other threatening capabilities, or to own or control strategically vital assets" in the Western Hemisphere.¹³ The U.S. State Department's *Agency Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2026-2030* further asserts that the United States will seek to prevent and roll back such control whether it "is exercised directly by competing powers or instead through purportedly private entities."¹⁴

Panama Canal and Greenland

The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD, which is "using a secondary Department of War designation," under Executive Order (E.O.) 14347, dated September 5, 2025) has emphasized efforts to "guarantee U.S. military and commercial access to key terrain" in the region, including

⁸ See "Relations with the People's Republic of China and the Indo-Pacific" in CRS Report R47620, *Canada: Background and U.S. Relations*, coordinated by Peter J. Meyer; and Brian Winter, "Latin America Looks East: As Washington Idles, China Is Cutting Deals," *Foreign Affairs*, February 24, 2022.

⁹ J. Luis Rodriguez, "Explaining Latin America's Contradictory Reactions to the War in Ukraine," *War on the Rocks*, April 27, 2022; and Michael Stott et al., "'We are for Peace': Latin America Rejects Pleas to Send Weapons to Ukraine," *Financial Times*, February 15, 2023.

¹⁰ See, for example, Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, "Latin America Doesn't Want a New Cold War," *Americas Quarterly*, April 28, 2022.

¹¹ See, for example, Matias Spektor, "In Defense of the Fence Sitters: What the West Gets Wrong about Hedging," *Foreign Affairs*, April 18, 2023.

¹² White House, *National Security Strategy*, p. 5.

¹³ White House, *National Security Strategy*, p. 15.

¹⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Agency Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2026-2030*, January 2026, p. 8. This focus on private entities under the control of foreign governments echoes what is known as the "Lodge Corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine, proposed by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge and adopted by the U.S. Senate in S. Res. 71 during the 62nd Congress. See "Foreign Occupations on American Continents," *Congressional Record*, vol. 48, part 10 (August 2, 1912), pp. 10045-10047, <https://www.congress.gov/bound-congressional-record/1912/08/02/senate-section>.

the Panama Canal and Greenland.¹⁵ The United States constructed and administered the Panama Canal for much of the 20th century before transferring control to Panama in 1999, in accordance with treaties ratified with the advice and consent of the U.S. Senate in 1978.¹⁶ More than 40% of U.S. container traffic reportedly transits the canal annually.¹⁷

In his second inaugural address, President Trump asserted that his Administration intended to reclaim the Panama Canal on national security grounds, alleging PRC control of the waterway.¹⁸ Per Panama's constitution, the Panama Canal Authority, an autonomous government agency, has exclusive control over the "administration, operation, conservation, maintenance and modernization" of the canal.¹⁹ The President's allegations appear to be based primarily on a concession granted to Panama Ports Company (PPC), S.A., a subsidiary of Hong Kong-based CK Hutchison Holdings, Ltd., that had managed and operated the Balboa and Cristóbal ports located at either end of the canal since 1997. On the same day as President Trump's address, Panama's comptroller general announced an audit of PPC.²⁰ Panama's comptroller general subsequently launched a legal complaint, resulting in a January 2026 Panamanian supreme court ruling that annulled the concession granted to PPC.²¹ Following the ruling, the Panamanian government granted interim concessions to APM Terminals, a subsidiary of Denmark-based A.P. Moller-Maersk, and Terminal Investment Limited, primarily owned by Switzerland-based Mediterranean Shipping Company.²² U.S. pressure also may have contributed to the government's February 2025 decision to end Panama's participation in the Belt and Road Initiative—a PRC initiative intended to develop China-centered and -controlled global infrastructure, transportation, trade, and production networks.²³

In April 2025, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth visited Panama to discuss efforts to secure the canal.²⁴ During the visit, the U.S. and Panamanian governments signed multiple agreements, including a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to enhance defense cooperation that Secretary Hegseth stated would allow both countries' forces to reestablish "rotational and joint presence" at

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), *2026 National Defense Strategy [Unclassified]*, January 23, 2026, p. 16.

¹⁶ Panamanian civilian discontent with U.S. control of the canal prompted negotiations during the 1960s and 1970s that culminated in the Panama Canal Treaty, which provided for the transfer of the canal and its operations to Panama, and the Treaty Concerning the Permanent Neutrality and Operation of the Panama Canal, which set out the rights and obligations of the United States and Panama to permanently maintain a "regime of neutrality" in canal operations. The texts of the treaties, as modified by the U.S. Senate, are available at <https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/wha/rlnks/11936.htm>.

¹⁷ Statement of Louis E. Sola, Chairman, Federal Maritime Commission, before the U.S. Congress, Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, *Fees and Foreign Influence: Examining the Panama Canal and Its Impact on U.S. Trade and National Security*, 119th Cong., 1st sess., January 28, 2025.

¹⁸ White House, "The Inaugural Address," January 20, 2025.

¹⁹ Constitución Política de la República de Panamá, Art. 316.

²⁰ Contraloría General de la República de Panamá, "La Contraloría General Inicia Auditoría Financiera y de Cumplimiento en Panama Ports Company," January 20, 2025.

²¹ República de Panamá, Órgano Judicial, Corte Suprema de Justicia – Pleno, "Fallo de la Corte N° S/N (jueves 29 de enero 2026)," *Gaceta Oficial*, N° 30468, February 23, 2026.

²² Gobierno Nacional de Panamá, "Consejo de Gabinete Aprueba Dos Contratos de Concesión Transitorios que Garantizan la Operación de los Puertos Cristóbal y Balboa," February 23, 2026. CK Hutchison has launched international arbitration proceedings against Panama. The company had been in negotiations to sell 43 ports, including Balboa and Cristóbal, to a consortium including U.S.-based asset management firm BlackRock, but the deal stalled amid PRC and Panamanian government regulatory processes.

²³ Gobierno Nacional de Panamá, "Panamá y Estados Unidos Logran Avances en Temas Comerciales y Migratorios," February 2, 2025.

²⁴ Secretary Hegseth is using "Secretary of War" as a "secondary title" under E.O. 14347 of September 5, 2025.

areas around the Panama Canal that previously had hosted U.S. military installations.²⁵ Opposition to the MOU, due to concerns about Panamanian sovereignty among other issues, contributed to countrywide protests and strikes in 2025.²⁶ Panamanian officials have asserted that the agreement does not cede Panamanian sovereignty and the country will not accept foreign military bases on its territory, in accordance with the Panama Canal treaties.²⁷ The U.S. State Department reportedly revoked the U.S. visas of some Panamanian opposition leaders who had condemned the MOU.²⁸

The Trump Administration also has asserted repeatedly that U.S. control of Greenland, a self-governing part of the Kingdom of Denmark, is vital to U.S. national security, both to counter China and Russia in the Arctic and to execute the President's proposed Golden Dome missile defense plan.²⁹ In June 2025, NORTHCOM announced that Greenland had been transferred from U.S. European Command's area of responsibility to that of NORTHCOM, which also includes the continental United States, Canada, Mexico, and portions of the Caribbean.³⁰ Danish and Greenlandic officials have expressed shared concerns about the Arctic, and have invited discussions about an expanded U.S. military presence in Greenland—currently consisting of Pituffik Space Base—through the 1951 U.S.-Danish Agreement Concerning the Defense of Greenland, as amended. They repeatedly have pushed back on the Administration's statements regarding the potential U.S. purchase or military seizure of Greenland, however, which have strained relations. Since January 2026, when President Trump stated he “won't use force” in Greenland, U.S., Danish, and Greenlandic officials have been holding talks through a high-level working group.³¹

Critical Infrastructure

Other Trump Administration initiatives have focused on limiting extra-hemispheric competitors' control over critical infrastructure in the Western Hemisphere. For example, the State Department has continued to provide assistance to Costa Rica to strengthen the country's cyber defenses and secure its fifth-generation (5G) telecommunications infrastructure.³² The State Department also

²⁵ DOD, “Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth Conducts Joint Press Engagement with Panamanian Public Security Minister Frank Abrego in Panama City,” April 9, 2025.

²⁶ *LatinNews Daily*, “Panama: Mulino Stands Firm as Protests Continue,” May 9, 2025.

²⁷ Article V of the Treaty Concerning the Permanent Neutrality and Operation of the Panama Canal states that “only the Republic of Panama shall operate the Canal and maintain military forces, defense sites and military installations within its national territory.” José Agustín Del Mar, “Mulino Reacciona Contra EEUU: ‘Bases Militares Extranjeras Son Inaceptables,’” *ECO TV Panamá*, April 10, 2025.

²⁸ Frances Robles, “U.S. Revokes Visa of Panama's Former President Who Criticized Trump Deal,” *New York Times*, June 17, 2025.

²⁹ This paragraph draws from CRS Insight IN12643, *Greenland, Denmark, and U.S. Relations*, by Sarah E. Garding. For information on the Golden Dome, see CRS In Focus IF13115, *Defense Primer: The Golden Dome for America*, by Hannah D. Dennis.

³⁰ NORTHCOM, “Greenland Now in U.S. Northern Command Area of Responsibility,” June 17, 2025. For information on NORTHCOM, see CRS In Focus IF13044, *Defense Primer: U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM)*, by Robert Switzer and Clare Ribando Seelke.

³¹ During his speech, President Trump stated, “We probably won't get anything unless I decide to use excessive strength and force, where we would be, frankly, unstoppable. But I won't do that. Okay? Now everyone's saying, ‘Oh, good.’ That's probably the biggest statement I made, because people thought I would use force. But I don't have to use force. I don't want to use force. I won't use force. All the United States is asking for is a place called Greenland.” World Economic Forum, “Davos 2026: Special Address by Donald J Trump, President of the United States of America,” January 21, 2026; and CQ Transcripts, “Senate Foreign Relations Committee Holds Hearing on U.S.-Venezuela Policy,” January 28, 2026.

³² U.S. Department of State, “100 Days of an America First State Department,” April 29, 2025.

reportedly has revoked the visas of several legislators and other Costa Rican officials, some of whom had questioned a 2023 decree issued by President Rodrigo Chaves (2022-2026) to effectively exclude PRC-based companies from the country's 5G network.³³

In several other Western Hemisphere countries, the Trump Administration has pressed governments to roll back or prevent PRC investment in certain infrastructure projects, achieving unclear results.³⁴ In February 2026, for example, the State Department revoked the visas of three Chilean government officials alleged to have “knowingly directed, authorized, funded, provided significant support to, and/or carried out activities that compromised critical telecommunications infrastructure and undermined regional security in our hemisphere.”³⁵ The officials reportedly were evaluating a proposal by a consortium including PRC-based companies to build a subsea cable that would connect Chile to Hong Kong.³⁶ The U.S. Ambassador to Chile also expressed dissatisfaction with the Chilean government's response to U.S. allegations that foreign malicious actors had hacked into Chilean telecommunications systems and with Chile's continued lack of a national-security-focused investment screening mechanism.³⁷ The Chilean government, led by then-President Gabriel Boric (2022-2026), rejected the U.S. contention that it had undermined regional security and reportedly asserted that Chile would not make decisions under threats or pressure from any country.³⁸ The administration of President José Antonio Kast, inaugurated on March 11, 2026, has stated that it intends to review the subsea cable proposal and that it plans to maintain close ties with both the United States and China.³⁹

The Trump Administration also has incorporated provisions related to critical infrastructure into some reciprocal trade agreements negotiated with Western Hemisphere countries (see “Executive Trade Agreements”). For example, agreements concluded with Argentina, Ecuador, El Salvador, and Guatemala include partner country commitments to cooperate with the United States on investment security matters.⁴⁰ The agreements with Argentina, El Salvador, and Guatemala also include specific commitments to use communication technology suppliers that “do not

³³ The decree limits participation in the 5G network to firms from countries that endorse the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, which the PRC has not signed. See, for example, Luis Manuel Madrigal, “Gobierno de Estados Unidos Sanciona a Dos Diputadas del Liberal Progresista,” *Delfino*, February 19, 2025; and Adrián Z. Rivero, “Magistrado Paul Rueda Confirma Cancelación de Su Visa Estadounidense,” *Semanario Universidad*, July 9, 2025.

³⁴ See, for example, Franklin Briceño, “In Blunt Warning, the U.S. Says Peru Could Lose Its Sovereignty to China,” Associated Press, February 12, 2026; and Igor Patrick, “Washington Signals It Wants China Kept Out of Brazil's Largest Port Auction,” *South China Morning Post*, March 17, 2026.

³⁵ Marco Rubio, Secretary of State, “Visa Revocations on Chilean Nationals Undermining Regional Security,” U.S. Department of State, February 20, 2026.

³⁶ U.S.-based Google is currently building another subsea cable that is to connect Chile to Asia via Australia. Business News Americas, “Visa Revocations Strain Chile-Hong Kong Cable Project,” February 23, 2026.

³⁷ U.S. Embassy in Chile, “Palabras de Introducción del Embajador de los EE.UU. en Chile, Brandon Judd, Durante Su Conferencia de Prensa el Lunes 23 de Febrero de 2026,” February 23, 2026. In February 2025, the Trump Administration terminated a \$200,000 grant intended to engage Chilean stakeholders on addressing foreign investment risks. Project Grant SINLEC24GR5244, https://www.usaspending.gov/award/ASST_NON_SINLEC24GR5244_1900.

³⁸ Gobierno de Chile, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, “Gobierno de Chile Rechaza la Imposición de Medidas Unilaterales por Parte de Estados Unidos,” February 20, 2026; and Paz Rubio, “Por Sanción EE.UU.: Vallejo Califica Decisión de ‘Arbitraria’ y Recalca que Chile ‘No Toma Decisiones Bajo Amenaza de Ningún País,’” *La Tercera*, February 23, 2026.

³⁹ “Queremos Reponer la Buenas Relaciones que Nunca Debimos Haber Perdido con EE.UU.,” *El Mercurio*, March 15, 2026.

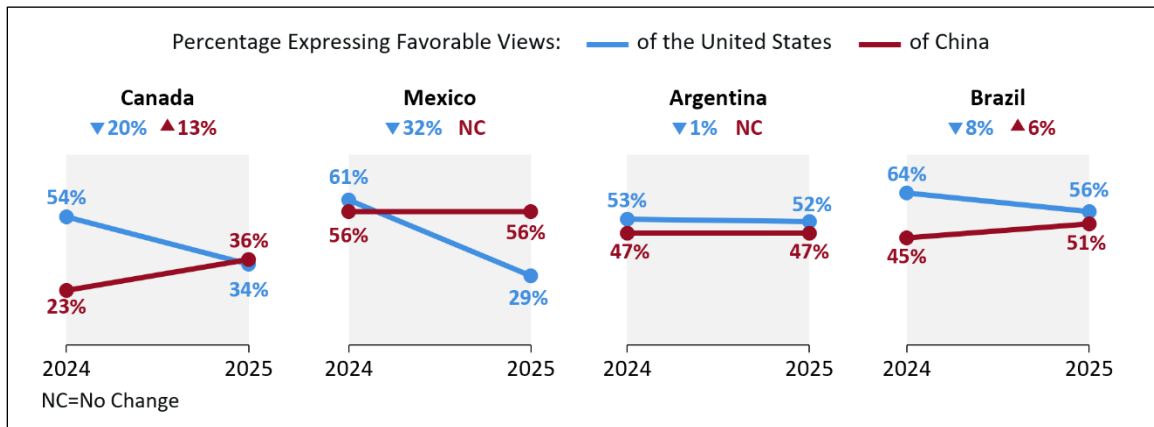
⁴⁰ United States of America-Argentine Republic Agreement on Reciprocal Trade and Investment, 2026, Article 4.2; Agreement between the United States of America and the Republic of Ecuador on Reciprocal Trade, 2026, Article 5.2; Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of El Salvador on Reciprocal Trade, 2026, Article 5.2; and Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Guatemala on Reciprocal Trade, 2026, Article 5.2. The texts of the agreements are available at <https://ustr.gov/trade-agreements/agreements-reciprocal-trade>.

compromise the security, safeguards, and intellectual property of information and communication technology infrastructure, including 5G, 6G, communication satellites, and undersea cables.”⁴¹

Apparent Backlash

An apparent decline in favorable views of the United States among the populations of certain Western Hemisphere countries may affect the second Trump Administration’s efforts to ensure the United States is the economic and security partner of choice in the region. According to the Pew Research Center, between spring 2024 and spring 2025, favorable views of the United States fell below those of China in Canada and Mexico, the top two U.S. trading partners. The gap in favorable views of the United States and China narrowed in Brazil, South America’s largest economy, and remained relatively unchanged in Argentina, South America’s second-largest economy (see **Figure 2**). Some more recent polls suggest public opinion in some of these countries may have continued to shift against the United States. In a February 2026 poll, for example, Canadian respondents asserted by a 57%-23% margin that it is better to depend on China than on the United States under President Trump.⁴² Such views in the hemisphere appear to reflect, in part, opposition to the Administration’s tariffs (see “Tariff Actions”) and concerns about potential U.S. threats to their countries’ sovereignty. They also may reflect the PRC’s efforts to portray itself as a reliable partner committed to advancing mutual interests.⁴³

Figure 2. Views of the United States and China in Selected Western Hemisphere Countries, 2024 and 2025



Sources: Created by CRS using data from Richard Wike et al., *U.S. Image Declines in Many Nations Amid Low Confidence in Trump*, Pew Research Center, June 11, 2025; and Lara Silver et al., *International Views of China Turn Slightly More Positive*, Pew Research Center, July 15, 2025.

Note: No other Western Hemisphere countries were surveyed.

⁴¹ United States of America-Argentine Republic Agreement on Reciprocal Trade and Investment, Annex III, Article 3.2; Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of El Salvador on Reciprocal Trade, Annex III, Article 3.3; and Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Guatemala on Reciprocal Trade, Annex III, Article 3.2.

⁴² 20% of respondents did not express any opinion. Nick Tayolor-Vaisey and Anna Aiederkehr, “Look How Much Canadians Hate the United States Now,” *Politico*, February 19, 2026.

⁴³ See, for example, People’s Republic of China, State Council, “Full Text: President Xi’s Keynote Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the China-CELAC Forum,” May 13, 2025; and Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in Canada, “‘China-Canada Relations Have Entered a New Era of Building a New Strategic Partnership’—Full Transcript of Chinese Ambassador to Canada H. E. Want Di’s Interview with the Canadian Press,” January 24, 2026.

Whereas some Western Hemisphere governments, including those of Argentina and Mexico, have largely sought closer alignment with the United States on economic and security policies,⁴⁴ some other governments in the region have taken steps to bolster their economic and security ties with other powers, partly to reduce their reliance on the United States. In May 2025, for example, Colombia signed a cooperation plan with China on the Belt and Road Initiative with the aim of increasing economic and technological cooperation.⁴⁵ Brazil's government pushed to finalize a trade agreement between the Common Market of the South (*Mercosur*) trade bloc and the European Union (EU), and it reportedly is considering negotiation of a partial trade agreement with China.⁴⁶ In January 2026, the Canadian government announced a new strategic partnership with the PRC intended to facilitate certain energy, clean technology, and agricultural trade.⁴⁷ Canada also has signed new defense cooperation and procurement agreements with the EU.⁴⁸

Legislative Action and Issues for Congressional Consideration

The 119th Congress has taken some oversight and legislative actions that could shape U.S. efforts to compete with the PRC and Russia in the Western Hemisphere. For example, congressional committees have examined several aspects of China's activities in the Western Hemisphere and their implications for the United States.⁴⁹ The Intelligence Authorization Act for FY2026 (P.L. 119-60, Division F) requires the Director of National Intelligence to produce a 10-year National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on the Western Hemisphere by December 2026. Among other elements, the NIE is to assess major threats to U.S. national security interests in the region; the attitudes of other Western Hemisphere countries toward partnership with the United States, China, and Russia; and the extent to which threats to U.S. national security interests could be mitigated by expanded economic and security cooperation.⁵⁰ The NIE, along with the findings of congressional committees, could help Congress assess the relative effectiveness of U.S. policies and approaches and identify the types of activities to authorize or fund to advance U.S. goals.

The 119th Congress also has enacted a six-year reauthorization of the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), an agency that seeks to mobilize private capital for investments to advance economic development in partner countries and other U.S. foreign policy

⁴⁴ See, for example, *Buenos Aires Times*, "Milei Wants Argentina's U.S. 'Strategic Alliance' to Be 'State Policy,'" March 2, 2026; and Jude Webber, "Mexico Imposes Tariffs of up to 50% on Chinese Goods," *Financial Times*, December 11, 2025.

⁴⁵ Presidencia de Colombia, "'Ya Entramos a la Ruta de la Seda': Presidente Petro tras la Firma de Histórico Plan de Cooperación con China par Estrechar Lazos Económicos, Tecnológicos y Culturales," May 14, 2025.

⁴⁶ Governo do Brasil, Presidência da República, "Lula, on the Approval of the European Union-MERCOSUR Agreement: 'A Historical Day for Multilateralism,'" January 10, 2026; Lisandra Paraguassu and Lucinda Elliott, "Brazil Signals New Openness to Mercosur-China Talks as Beijing Seeks Deeper Ties," Reuters, February 6, 2026.

⁴⁷ Prime Minister of Canada, "Prime Minister Carney Forges New Strategic Partnership with the People's Republic of China Focused on Energy, Agri-Food, and Trade," January 16, 2026.

⁴⁸ Council of the European Union, *Security and Defence Partnership Between the European Union and Canada*, June 18, 2025; and Council of the European Union, "SAFE: Member States Endorse Agreement on the Participation of Canada," December 19, 2025.

⁴⁹ See, for example, U.S. Congress, Joint U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *China's Expanding Interests in Latin America: Development, Leverage, Coercion, and Crime*, hearing, 119th Cong., 2nd sess., March 19, 2026; House Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party, *Pulling Latin America into China's Orbit: How the PLA Weaponizes the Ground Architecture of the Space Silk Road in Venezuela, Brazil, Bolivia, Argentina, and Chile*, committee print, 119th Cong., 2nd sess., February 26, 2026; and Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *The Price of Retreat: America Cedes Global Leadership to China*, minority report, 119th Cong. 1st sess., July 2025.

⁵⁰ P.L. 119-60, Division F, Title LXVII, Subtitle B, Section 6716.

interests, taking into account projects’ “economic and financial soundness.”⁵¹ Among other changes, the DFC Modernization and Reauthorization Act of 2025 (P.L. 119-60, Division H, Title LXXXVII) raises the agency’s lending cap from \$60 billion to \$205 billion and provides greater flexibility to support projects in upper-middle-income and high-income countries, in part to support U.S. national security and strategic economic competitiveness.⁵² At the same time, it bars DFC from operating in “countries of concern” (e.g., Cuba, Venezuela), seemingly without exception. Moving forward, Congress could evaluate how the various changes in the reauthorization affect the United States’ ability to compete with China and Russia in the Western Hemisphere and assess whether to further modify the agency’s authorities and resources.

Congress also may examine how other competition-related U.S. foreign policy tools have been used in the Western Hemisphere and assess whether adjustments or additional tools may be needed. Current competition-related U.S. foreign policy tools include the following:

- **The International Technology Security and Innovation Fund**, managed by the State Department, seeks to support the development and adoption of secure telecommunications technologies, semiconductor supply chains, and other emerging technologies worldwide. The CHIPS Act of 2022 (P.L. 117-167, Division A, §102(c)) established the fund and appropriated \$100 million per year between FY2023 and FY2027 to carry out its mandate.
- **The Economic Resilience Initiative** seeks to counter economic coercion and otherwise strengthen the economic security and stability of the United States and partner countries worldwide. The National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs (NSRP) Appropriations Act, 2026 (P.L. 119-75, Division F, §7030) directed \$155 million for the initiative to support strategic infrastructure investments, activities to enhance critical mineral supply chain security, and efforts to advance cybersecurity and the adoption and deployment of secure information and communications technology. That is \$60 million (28%) less than was provided for the initiative in FY2024 and FY2025 (P.L. 118-47, Division F, extended through FY2025 by P.L. 119-4). The Trump Administration’s FY2027 budget request does not mention the initiative.⁵³
- **The Countering PRC Influence Fund (CPIF)** seeks to limit the influence of the PRC, the Communist Party of China, and entities acting on their behalf worldwide. The FY2026 NSRP legislation (§7043(b)(2)) directed \$400 million for the CPIF. That is the same level as Congress provided for the fund in FY2024 and FY2025. The Trump Administration has requested at least \$245 million for the CPIF for FY2027.⁵⁴
- **The International Visitor Leadership Program** seeks to strengthen ties between U.S. and international leaders in government, business, academia, and

⁵¹ Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development Act of 2018 (BUILD Act, Div. F of P.L. 115-254), as amended. See CRS In Focus IF11436, *U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC)*, by Shayerah I. Akhtar and Nick M. Brown, for more on the DFC.

⁵² The World Bank classifies five Western Hemisphere countries other than the United States as *high income* and 11 as *upper-middle income*. The reauthorization allows the DFC to support projects in the region’s high-income countries, which was previously prohibited, and arguably sets less stringent certification requirements for projects in upper-middle-income countries compared with what was previously required.

⁵³ U.S. Department of State, *Congressional Budget Justification, Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs, Fiscal Year 2027*, April 2026. (Hereafter, U.S. Department of State, *FY2027 Congressional Budget Justification*).

⁵⁴ U.S. Department of State, *FY2027 Congressional Budget Justification*, p. 91.

other fields. The FY2026 NSRP legislation directed \$99.75 million for the program under the Educational and Cultural Exchange account. Congress does not appear to have enacted a specific funding directive for the program in FY2024 or FY2025. The Trump Administration has requested \$42 million for the International Visitor Leadership Program for FY2027.⁵⁵

- **The Regional China Officer (RCO) Program** deploys Department of State experts on China around the world to monitor and report on PRC activities. The Department of State Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 (P.L. 119-60, Division E, §5175) authorized and expanded the program and directed that at least two RCOs be assigned to U.S. diplomatic posts in the Western Hemisphere.

Additionally, Congress could assess the extent to which the U.S. military presence in the Western Hemisphere affects the influence of extra-hemispheric competitors and other security objectives. For example, Congress could examine current basing in the region, which includes a persistent U.S. presence at bases in Greenland, the Bahamas, Cuba, and Honduras and access to other military sites in El Salvador, Aruba, and Curaçao.⁵⁶ Congress also could examine the potential costs and benefits of sustaining or adjusting the U.S. presence at those locations as well as pursuing new bases or alternative arrangements.

Counternarcotics and Transnational Crime

Disrupting the production and trafficking of illicit drugs has been a long-standing element of U.S. security policy in the Western Hemisphere. Successive U.S. Administrations and Congresses have provided foreign assistance, law enforcement training and equipment, and defense and intelligence support to increase regional partner governments' capacity to reduce illicit drug production, interdict illegal drug flows, and disrupt criminal networks. Some bilateral counternarcotics efforts have evolved into major country initiatives, such as the Mérida Initiative in Mexico and the U.S.-Colombia Strategic Development Initiative (Plan Colombia).⁵⁷ The United States also pursues unilateral policies to advance counternarcotics efforts, including placing economic sanctions and visa restrictions on foreign drug traffickers and government officials found to be involved in the illicit drug trade.

Congress has shaped U.S. policy to counter drug trafficking and other organized criminal activity in the region. For example, Congress has mandated that various executive branch agencies provide annual updates to key U.S. counternarcotics strategies, including the White House's Office of National Drug Policy's *U.S. National Drug Control Strategy* and the State Department's *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report* (INCSR).⁵⁸ Successive Congresses also have conditioned some U.S. support, including foreign assistance, on partner countries' cooperation on counternarcotics. Since the early 2000s, for example, Congress has required that the President identify major illicit drug-producing and drug-transit countries and withhold some foreign

⁵⁵ U.S. Department of State, *FY2027 Congressional Budget Justification*, p. 43.

⁵⁶ CRS Report R48123, *U.S. Overseas Basing: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Luke A. Nicastro and Andrew Tilghman. Aruba and Curaçao are self-governing parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

⁵⁷ For more information, see CRS In Focus IF10578, *Evolution of U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation*, by Clare Ribando Seelke; and CRS Report R48287, *Colombia: Background and U.S. Relations*, by Clare Ribando Seelke.

⁵⁸ Pursuant to Section 489 of the Foreign Assistance Act (22 U.S.C. 2291h).

assistance from any country that the President has determined has “failed demonstrably” to adhere to international and bilateral counternarcotics agreements during the previous 12 months.⁵⁹

These U.S. initiatives have helped dismantle some drug trafficking organizations and strengthened the capacities of some countries’ security and justice sector institutions, on the one hand; on the other hand, they have failed to secure sustained declines of illicit drug production, including cocaine.⁶⁰ Organized crime remains a key driver of violence and corruption in the region. Since the 2010s, U.S. policymakers have labeled some drug trafficking organizations as transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), in part to reflect their international reach. Many TCOs have grown more sophisticated and diversified their activities into extortion, illegal gold mining and logging, migrant smuggling, human trafficking, and other crimes in addition to drug trafficking.⁶¹

Second Trump Administration Approach and Regional Response

The second Trump Administration has pursued a more militarized approach to illicit narcotics and related security challenges in the Western Hemisphere compared with previous U.S. Administrations. Although DOD has relied on several statutory authorities “to target, deny, disrupt, or degrade national security threats enabled by illicit drug trafficking and other forms of transnational organized crime” for decades, such efforts generally have focused on non-lethal activities.⁶² The 2025 NSS articulates a security policy that seeks to make greater use of the U.S. Armed Forces to counter TCOs, “including where necessary the use of lethal force” to replace what it characterizes as “the failed law enforcement-only strategy of the last several decades.”⁶³ The NSS also describes cooperation from partner governments to counter “narco-terrorists, cartels, and other transnational criminal organizations,” as a “core foreign policy interest” and states that the United States will “work to strengthen our security partnerships—from weapons sales to intelligence sharing to joint exercises.”⁶⁴

Tariffs as a Counternarcotics Policy Tool

President Trump began his second term by employing tariffs to advance counternarcotics and counter-crime objectives, among other goals. On January 20, 2025, he declared a national

⁵⁹ Pursuant to Section 706 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for FY2003 (P.L. 107-228; 22 U.S.C. §2291j-1). The law provides for the President to waive foreign assistance restrictions for countries the President has determined to have “failed demonstrably,” if the President finds that U.S. assistance to that country is “vital to the national interests of the United States.” Congress has mandated presidential designation procedures on major illicit drug producing and transit countries since the 1980s, pursuant to Section 490 of the Foreign Assistance Act (P.L. 87-195, as amended; 22 U.S.C. §2291j).

⁶⁰ See, for example, UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), “Illicit Coca Cultivation, 2005-2023,” in “Key Findings: Latest Trends in Drug Markets,” *World Drug Report 2025*, June 2025, p. 13.

⁶¹ See, for example, Javier Corrales and Will Freeman, “How Organized Crime Threatens Latin America,” *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 35, no. 4 (October 2024), pp. 149-161.

⁶² For more information on DOD’s framework to support counterdrug and counter-transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) prior to the second Trump Administration, see, for example, DOD, *DOD Counterdrug and Counter-Transnational Organized Crime Policy*, DOD Instruction 3000.14, August 28, 2020, p. 5. DOD is the single lead agency for the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of U.S.-bound illicit drug flows (pursuant to 10 U.S.C. §124). Other related DOD activities include providing training and equipment to foreign law enforcement agencies and security forces to counter TCO crime operations (pursuant to 10 U.S.C. §333) and creating joint task forces in collaboration with other U.S. agencies to combat drug trafficking and terrorism (pursuant to P.L. 108-136, §1022).

⁶³ White House, *National Security Strategy*, p. 16.

⁶⁴ White House, *National Security Strategy*, p. 3.

emergency on the southern border of the United States via Presidential Proclamation 10886, citing the threats of criminal organizations and illicit narcotics trafficking.⁶⁵ On February 1, 2025, President Trump issued E.O.s 14193, 14194, and 14195 to expand the proclamation and declare additional national emergencies related to the alleged failures of Canada, Mexico, and China to combat the trafficking of illicit drugs by criminal organizations in the United States, among other justifications.⁶⁶ These executive orders imposed tariffs on goods from all three countries, citing authorities from the International Emergency Economic Powers Act of 1977 (IEEPA; 50 U.S.C. §§1701 et seq.). President Trump extended the national emergencies for all three countries for another year on January 12, 2026.⁶⁷ However, on February 20, 2026, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that IEEPA does not give the President authority to impose tariffs.⁶⁸ President Trump announced new tariffs under different authorities (see “Tariff Actions”).

Terrorist Designations and Use of Military Force Against Criminal Groups

On January 20, 2025, President Trump issued E.O. 14157, which established a process for designating certain cartels and TCOs as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) and Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs), citing these groups’ use of violence and trafficking of illicit drugs as threats to national security.⁶⁹ Consequences of these designations include immigration-related restrictions, asset-blocking sanctions, and secondary sanctions risks.⁷⁰ Prior to the second Trump Administration, the U.S. government had designated a total of six Western Hemisphere-based organizations as FTOs and SDGTs (see **Table 1**). All six originated as politically and ideologically motivated armed groups before becoming involved in profit-motivated criminality. During 2025, the Trump Administration designated a total of 15 Western Hemisphere-based criminal organizations as FTOs and SDGTs: 6 Mexican criminal organizations, 2 Ecuadoran gangs, 1 Colombian criminal group, 2 Central American gangs, 2 Haitian gangs, and 2 Venezuelan criminal organizations.⁷¹

⁶⁵ Proclamation 10886 of January 20, 2025, “Declaring a National Emergency at the Southern Border of the United States,” 90 *Federal Register* 8327, January 29, 2025.

⁶⁶ China was included, as it is a major source of precursor chemicals used to produce illicit synthetic drugs trafficked in the Western Hemisphere. Executive Order (E.O.) 14193 of February 1, 2025, “Imposing Duties to Address the Flow of Illicit Drugs Across Our Northern Border,” 90 *Federal Register* 9113, February 7, 2025; E.O. 14194 of February 1, 2025, “Imposing Duties to Address the Situation at Our Southern Border,” 90 *Federal Register* 9117, February 7, 2025; E.O. 14195 of February 1, 2025, “Imposing Duties to Address the Synthetic Opioid Supply Chain in the People’s Republic of China,” 90 *Federal Register* 9121, February 7, 2025.

⁶⁷ President Donald J. Trump, Notice of January 12, 2026, “Continuation of the National Emergencies with Respect to the Southern Border of the United States and Cartels and Other Transnational Organizations,” 91 *Federal Register* 1665, January 14, 2026.

⁶⁸ For more information, see CRS Legal Sidebar LSB11398, *Supreme Court Rules Against Tariffs Imposed Under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA)*, by Christopher T. Zirpoli.

⁶⁹ E.O. 14157 of January 20, 2025, “Designating Cartels and Other Organizations as Foreign Terrorist Organizations and Specially Designated Global Terrorists,” 90 *Federal Register* 8439, January 29, 2025.

⁷⁰ For more information, see CRS Insight IN11205, *Designating Cartels and Other Criminal Organizations as Foreign Terrorists: Recent Developments*, by Liana W. Rosen and Clare Ribando Seelke, and CRS In Focus IF10613, *The Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) List*, by Liana W. Rosen and Shelby B. Senger.

⁷¹ U.S. Department of State, “Foreign Terrorist Organizations,” <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>. See *Federal Register* for designations for each group.

Table I. U.S. Terrorist Designations of Western Hemisphere-Based Criminal Organizations

Transnational Criminal Organization	Country of Origin	Date of Designation as Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) (8 U.S.C. §1189)	Date of Designation as Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) (E.O. 13224, as amended)
Clan del Golfo	Colombia	12/17/2025	12/17/2025
Cartel de los Soles	Venezuela	11/24/2025	7/25/2025
Barrio 18	United States / El Salvador ^a	9/24/2025	9/24/2025
Los Choneros	Ecuador	9/05/2025	9/05/2025
Los Lobos	Ecuador	9/05/2025	9/05/2025
Viv Ansanm	Haiti	5/05/2025	5/05/2025
Gran Grif	Haiti	5/05/2025	5/05/2025
Cartel de Sinaloa	Mexico	2/20/2025	2/20/2025
Cartel de Jalisco Nueva Generacion (CJNG)	Mexico	2/20/2025	2/20/2025
Cartel del Noreste	Mexico	2/20/2025	2/20/2025
La Nueva Familia Michoacana	Mexico	2/20/2025	2/20/2025
Cartel del Golfo (Gulf Cartel)	Mexico	2/20/2025	2/20/2025
Carteles Unidos	Mexico	2/20/2025	2/20/2025
Tren de Aragua	Venezuela	2/20/2025	2/20/2025
Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13)	United States / El Salvador ^a	2/20/2025	2/20/2025
Segunda Marquetalia	Colombia	12/1/2021	12/1/2021
Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army (FARC-EP)	Colombia	12/1/2021	12/1/2021
National Liberation Army (ELN)	Colombia	10/2/1997	10/31/2001
Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso)	Peru	10/2/1997	10/31/2001
United Self Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC)	Colombia	09/10/2001 (revoked 07/15/2014)	10/31/2001
Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)	Colombia	10/08/1997 (revoked 12/01/2021)	10/31/2001 (revoked 12/01/2021)

Source: U.S. Department of State, “Foreign Terrorist Organizations,” <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations>; and CRS analysis of *Federal Register* notices available upon client request.

Notes: “Country of Origin” column reflects CRS analysis of each criminal organization’s country of origin and primary operation. The majority of criminal groups listed operate in multiple countries.

- a. Barrio 18 and MS-13 were both formed in the United States and later expanded their operations to El Salvador and other Central American countries. For more information, see CRS Report RL34112, *Gangs in Central America*, by Clare Ribando Seelke.

Although the FTO and SDGT designations do not authorize the use of military force, the Trump Administration has used the framing of these criminal groups as *narco-terrorists* or *designated terrorist organizations* to justify the use of military action against them. Previously, countering criminal organizations had been treated as the domain of law enforcement. In August 2025, Secretary of State Marco Rubio stated in an interview that designating criminal groups as terrorist groups enables the United States “to use other elements of American power, intelligence agencies, the Department of Defense ... to target these groups.”⁷² According to an August 2025 article from the *New York Times*, President Trump “secretly signed a directive to the Pentagon to begin using military force against certain Latin American drug cartels that his administration has deemed terrorist organizations.”⁷³

In September 2025, the U.S. military began conducting lethal strikes in the Eastern Pacific and Caribbean Sea on small vessels that allegedly were transporting illicit drugs on behalf of criminal organizations that had been designated as terrorist organizations in an effort known as Operation Southern Spear.⁷⁴ In a letter to Congress following the first strike, President Trump referred to the strike as an action of “self-defense” against a vessel “affiliated with a designated terrorist organization.”⁷⁵ As of May 9, 2026, the U.S. military reportedly had conducted 55 lethal strikes on such vessels, with a known death toll of 194 individuals.⁷⁶ SOUTHCOM reported that total obligations for Operation Southern Spear amounted to \$647.0 million from September 2025 through March 2026, according to a Lead Inspector General report submitted to Congress on May 20, 2026.⁷⁷

In a related action, President Trump deployed the U.S. military to capture and arrest then-Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro in January 2026. Maduro faces federal narco-terrorism and drug trafficking charges in the United States, and the U.S. government has claimed that he headed the designated FTO Cartel de los Soles.⁷⁸ On several occasions, President Trump has suggested that the U.S. government also could take unilateral military action against drug traffickers operating inside Mexico and Colombia.⁷⁹

⁷² U.S. Department of State, “Secretary of State Marco Rubio with Raymond Arroyo of EWTN’s The World Over,” August 7, 2025.

⁷³ Helene Cooper et al., “Trump Directs Military to Target Foreign Drug Cartels,” *New York Times*, August 8, 2025.

⁷⁴ Alex Horton et al., “U.S. Kills 11 in Strike on Alleged Drug Vessel from Venezuela, Trump Says,” *Washington Post*, September 2, 2025; Tyler McBrien, “Trump Offers First Legal Justification for Venezuela Boat Strike,” *Lawfare*, September 5, 2025.

⁷⁵ *Designated terrorist organization* is not a term defined in statute. It may or may not reference the Foreign Terrorist Organization or Specially Designated Global Terrorist designations. U.S. Congress, House, *Communication from the President of the United States, Transmitting a Notification of Military Action Taken on September 2, 2025, in the Caribbean Sea and of the Potential for Further Such Actions, Pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1543(a)(3)*; P.L. 93-148, Sec. 4(a); (87 STAT. 555), 119th Cong., 1st sess., September 4, 2025, H. Doc 119-92 (Washington: GPO, 2025).

⁷⁶ Washington Office on Latin America, “Facts to Inform the Debate About the U.S. Government’s Anti-Drug Offensive in the Americas,” accessed May 22, 2026, regularly updated at <https://www.wola.org/analysis/facts-to-inform-the-debate-about-the-u-s-governments-anti-drug-offensive-in-the-americas/>.

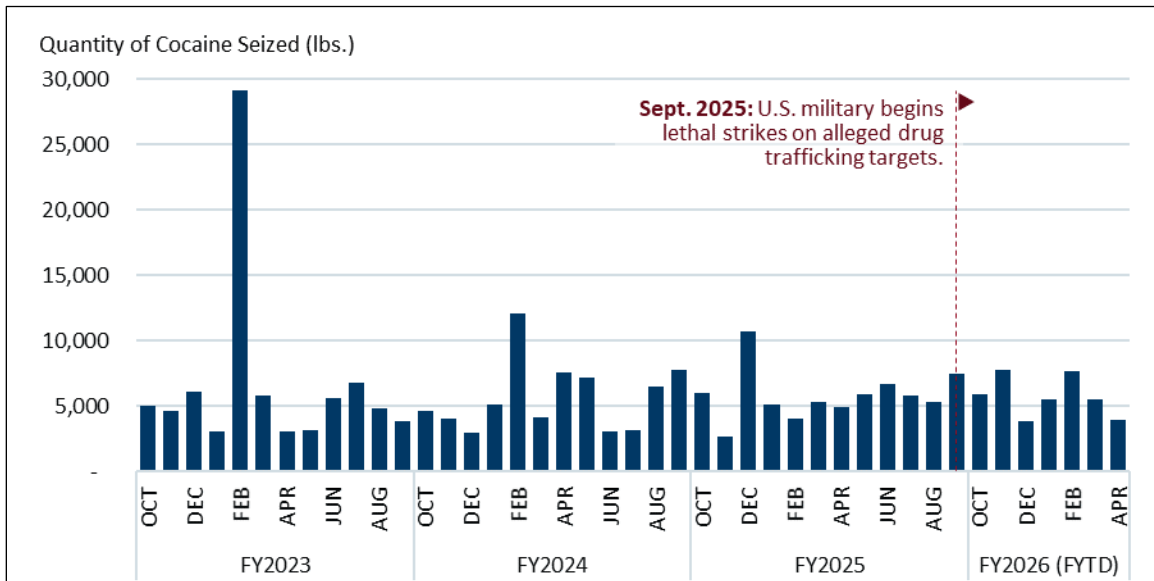
⁷⁷ Offices of the Inspector General of DOD and the U.S. Department of State, *Operation Southern Spear, January 1, 2026-March 31, 2026*, Lead Inspector General Report to the United States Congress, May 20, 2026, p. 6.

⁷⁸ U.S. Department of the Treasury, “Treasury Sanctions Venezuelan Cartel Headed by Maduro,” July 25, 2025; for additional information, see CRS Insight IN12618, *U.S. Capture of Venezuela’s Nicolás Maduro: Considerations for Congress*, by Clare Ribando Seelke.

⁷⁹ Herb Scribner, “Trump Hints at More Military Invasions. Here Are the Countries to Watch,” *Axios*, January 5, 2026.

It is unclear how the use of military force, including strikes on vessels alleged to be carrying illegal drugs, has affected criminal organizations and illicit drug trafficking to the United States. In March 2026 congressional testimony, an Administration official argued that lethal strikes are deterring traffickers and asserted that there had been a 30% reduction in drug vessel movements in the Caribbean and a 25% reduction in the Eastern Pacific since September 2025.⁸⁰ Meanwhile, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) illicit drug seizure data for September 2025 to April 2026 indicate that overall drug seizures and specifically seizures of cocaine—the drug most trafficked by sea—remain similar to or slightly higher than seizures in previous years (see **Figure 3**).⁸¹ The aforementioned Lead Inspector General report stated that SOUTHCOM “could not publicly release its measures of effectiveness for assessing the conduct” of Operation Southern Spear.⁸² In March 2026 testimony, SOUTHCOM Commander General Francis L. Donovan assessed that TCOs are adapting to the strikes, including by rerouting drug flows further west into the Pacific Ocean and using alternative drug trafficking methods, such as increased use of air traffic and shipping containers.⁸³

Figure 3. Cocaine Seized by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, FY2023-FY2026



Source: Created by CRS using data from Department of Homeland Security U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Note: Available data for FY2026 cover October 2025-April 2026.

Some analysts contend that military strikes on vessels, in contrast to a law enforcement approach, may prevent the gathering of intelligence and evidence that would enable both mapping of the

⁸⁰ Joseph Humire, performing the duties of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and the Americas Security Affairs, testimony before the U.S. Congress, House Armed Services Committee, *U.S. Military Posture and National Security Challenges in the Western Hemisphere*, 119th Cong., 2nd sess., March 17, 2026.

⁸¹ U.S. Customs and Border Protection, “Drug Seizure Statistics,” accessed April 20, 2026, <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/drug-seizure-statistics>.

⁸² Offices of the Inspector General of DOD and the U.S. Department of State, *Operation Southern Spear*, p. 3.

⁸³ General Francis L. Donovan, Commander of U.S. Southern Command, testimony before the U.S. Congress, House Armed Services Committee, *U.S. Military Posture & National Security Challenges in the Western Hemisphere*, 119th Cong., 2nd sess., March 17, 2026.

broader criminal network and eventual arrests and prosecution of criminals.⁸⁴ Media reports indicating that the U.S. Armed Forces struck some Ecuador-based fishing vessels in the Eastern Pacific in late March 2026 and released some of the vessels' crew members without charges have raised questions regarding U.S. targeting and objectives.⁸⁵

Foreign Assistance and Anti-Corruption Policy Changes

The Trump Administration appears to have scaled back some U.S. foreign assistance and other nonmilitary efforts aimed at improving public security and reducing corruption in the region. On January 20, 2025, President Trump issued an executive order pausing U.S. foreign aid globally for 90 days “pending reviews of such programs for programmatic efficiency and consistency with United States foreign policy,” and in March 2025, Secretary Rubio announced the termination of thousands of contracts and grants.⁸⁶ The U.S. State Department has not publicly released comprehensive information on the status of U.S. foreign aid programs following the review or the subsequent dismantling of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and reorganization of the State Department. Limited reporting from the press, implementers, and the U.S. government indicates that the Administration disrupted or terminated some International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) activities and USAID programs intended to counter corruption, reduce violence, and provide licit economic alternatives to cocaine production in the region.⁸⁷ For FY2027, the Trump Administration has requested \$535 million in INCLE aid for the Western Hemisphere, 56% of which would be devoted to counternarcotics and transnational crime-related programming. The proposal does not request any INCLE funds for good governance initiatives.⁸⁸

The Trump Administration also has shifted away from some U.S. efforts to hold accountable Western Hemisphere leaders involved in organized-crime-related corruption. In October 2025, for example, the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) lifted asset-blocking sanctions on Horacio Cartes, former Paraguayan president (2013-2018) and current head of the ruling right-wing *Colorado Party*.⁸⁹ In 2023, OFAC alleged that Cartes had engaged in

⁸⁴ Carol Rosenberg, “Even as U.S. Blows Up Boats, Coast Guard Captures Others at Sea,” *New York Times*, January 1, 2026; Arturo Torres et al., “The U.S. Sank the Alleged Narco-Terrorists’ Boat—and Let Them Go,” *Washington Post*, December 27, 2025.

⁸⁵ See, for example, Harriet Barber, “‘We Were Terrified They Were Going to Kill Us’: Fishers Who Survived U.S. Boat Strike Speak Out,” *Guardian*, April 21, 2026.

⁸⁶ E.O. 14169 of January 20, 2025, “Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid,” 90 *Federal Register* 8619, January 30, 2025; and Marco Rubio (@marcorubio), “After a 6 week review we are officially cancelling 83% of the programs at USAID ...,” X post, March 10, 2025, <https://x.com/marcorubio/status/1899021361797816325>.

⁸⁷ See, for example, Samantha Schmidt et al., “Trump’s Aid Freeze Hampers Anti-Narcotics Programs in Latin America,” *Washington Post*, March 16, 2025; Organization of American States, “Status of Programs, Projects, and Activities Impacted by the Suspension of U.S. Funds,” CP/CAAP/INF-4120/25, August 11, 2025; Luis Enrique Pérez, “USAID: Fin de la Cooperación Amenaza Más de 114 Mil Hectáreas de Cultivos Rescatados del Narcotráfico,” *Convoca*, June 23, 2025; and Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), *Terminated USAID Awards in El Salvador: Assets Were Disposed of According to USAID-Approved Plans*, Audit Report I-000-26-001-P, February 9, 2026.

⁸⁸ For comparison, the Biden Administration allocated \$470.2 million in INCLE aid to the Western Hemisphere in FY2023 (last year for which data are publicly available). U.S. Department of State, *FY2027 Congressional Budget Justification*, p. 108 and *FY2025 Congressional Budget Justification, Supplementary Tables – Foreign Operations*, p. 7.

⁸⁹ U.S. Department of the Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), “Counter Terrorism and Counter Narcotics Designations and Designation Update; Global Magnitsky Designations Removals,” October 6, 2025.

extensive corruption, including accepting bribes from the U.S.-designated FTO Hezbollah.⁹⁰ A State Department spokesperson reportedly asserted that sanctions on Cartes were “no longer required to incentivize changes in behavior and were therefore not in the foreign policy and national security interests of the United States.”⁹¹ In November 2025, President Trump announced his intention to pardon former Honduran president (2014-2022) and convicted drug trafficker Juan Orlando Hernández as part of a broader message of support for Hernández’s right-wing National Party days before Honduras’s national elections. Hernández had been sentenced to 45 years in prison in June 2024 for conspiring to import more than 400 tons of cocaine into the United States, working with the U.S.-designated FTO Cartel de Sinaloa, among other organizations. President Trump asserted that Hernández had been treated unfairly.⁹²

Regional Responses and Initiatives

Western Hemisphere governments have responded differently to the shifts in U.S. policy to counter TCOs. Some governments have expressed support for the second Trump Administration’s more militarized approach to address rising TCO-related crime and violence in their countries and have sought to bolster security cooperation with the United States.⁹³ Argentina, Canada, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Peru, among other countries, have sought greater security policy alignment with the United States by applying their own national terrorist designations to certain criminal groups designated as FTOs by the United States.⁹⁴ Likewise, some governments have granted the United States military access to facilities in their countries to support counternarcotics and other security operations in the region.⁹⁵ Various Western Hemisphere governments and institutions also have offered support for U.S.-backed security efforts in Haiti (see **text box** below, “Response to Insecurity in Haiti”).

Some governments and multilateral bodies in the region have opposed unilateral U.S. military action and expressed concern that some U.S. security actions could violate international law, result in human rights abuses, and infringe upon partner countries’ sovereignty. For example, the governments of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Uruguay expressed “deep concern and rejection” of the U.S. military operation to capture Maduro, asserting that the operation constituted “an extremely dangerous precedent for peace and regional security.”⁹⁶ In Brazil,

⁹⁰ U.S. Department of the Treasury, “Treasury Sanctions Paraguay’s Former President and Current Vice President for Corruption,” January 26, 2023.

⁹¹ Daniela Desantis and Lucinda Elliott, “U.S. Lifts Sanctions on Paraguay’s Ex-President Cartes,” Reuters, October 6, 2025.

⁹² For more information, see CRS Insight IN12621, *Presidential Pardon of Former Honduran President Convicted of Drug Trafficking*, by Peter J. Meyer.

⁹³ Anselm Gibbs and Bert Wilkinson, “Trinidad and Tobago Leader Praises Strike and Says U.S. Should Kill All Drug Traffickers ‘Violently,’” Associated Press, September 3, 2025.

⁹⁴ See, for example, Government of Canada, “Government of Canada Lists Seven Transnational Criminal Organizations as Terrorist Entities,” February 20, 2025; Congreso de la República del Perú, “Pleno del Congreso Aprobó Moción que Declara al Tren de Aragua Como Organización Terrorista,” March 12, 2026; Asamblea Nacional de Ecuador, “Asamblea de Ecuador Respaldó Declaración del Gobierno Respecto a los Grupos Terroristas ‘Cartel de los Soles’ y ‘Tren de Aragua,’” September 4, 2025; Ministerio de Seguridad Nacional de Argentina, “Resolución 186/2025,” *Boletín Oficial*, February 8, 2025; and Presidencia de la República del Paraguay, Decreto 4435, August 22, 2025.

⁹⁵ See, for example, Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, “Trinidad and Tobago Reaffirms Sustained Security Cooperation with United States,” December 5, 2025; and Associated Press, “Dominican Republic Grants US Access to Restricted Areas for Its Deadly Fight Against Drugs,” December 3, 2025.

⁹⁶ See, for example, Government of Brazil, “Statement from Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Uruguay and Spain Regarding the Events in Venezuela,” January 4, 2026.

legislative measures to apply Brazil’s anti-terrorism law to criminal groups reportedly stalled due to concerns that such a change could result in unilateral U.S. military strikes in Brazilian territory.⁹⁷ In December 2025, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) called upon the U.S. government to refrain from using lethal military force in public security operations, to ensure all security operations abide by international human rights standards, and to conduct independent investigations on lethal operations that have taken place.⁹⁸

Political conditions in some countries also have influenced regional security cooperation. In Ecuador, for example, the administration of President Daniel Noboa (2023-present) has moved to strengthen bilateral security ties with the United States amid deteriorating security conditions. In March 2026, U.S. and Ecuadoran forces conducted joint military operations targeting “Designated Terrorist Organizations,” according to a SOUTHCOM statement.⁹⁹ Ecuador’s Ministry of Defense stated that the joint operation near Ecuador’s northern border with Colombia destroyed a property used by Colombia-based armed group *Comandos de la Frontera*; some local residents reportedly asserted that the strike targeted a dairy farm and denied Ecuadorian authorities’ statements that arms had been found on the property.¹⁰⁰ U.S. military presence in Ecuador to support joint efforts to combat TCOs has been facilitated, in part, by a bilateral status of forces agreement, which entered into force in February 2024, despite Ecuador’s constitutional prohibition on the establishment of foreign military installations.¹⁰¹ In a November 2025 referendum, nearly 61% of the Ecuadoran electorate voted to uphold the constitutional ban on foreign military installations, scuttling reported plans to establish two U.S. military installations that would have hosted joint security activities in Ecuador.¹⁰²

In March 2026, the Trump Administration hosted leaders, defense chiefs, and other high-level officials from 16 Latin American and Caribbean countries to launch the Americas Counter Cartels Coalition—a “military partnership” aimed at advancing security cooperation.¹⁰³ The 16 participating countries joined the United States in signing a joint security declaration stating their intent to expand multilateral and bilateral cooperation to enhance regional security, including by “join[ing] a coalition to combat narco-terrorism and other shared threats in the Western Hemisphere.”¹⁰⁴ Some traditional key U.S. security partners, including Colombia and Mexico, did not join the coalition. Presidents Petro and Sheinbaum asserted their countries were not invited to participate.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁷ *Latin American Weekly Report*, “Brazil: Security Legislation Makes Progress in Congress,” November 20, 2025.

⁹⁸ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IAHCR), “IACHR Urges the United States to Ensure Respect for Human Rights in Extraterritorial Security Operations,” December 2, 2025. The IAHCR is an autonomous regional institution charged with promoting and protecting human rights in the Western Hemisphere.

⁹⁹ SOUTHCOM (@Southcom), “On March 3, Ecuadorian and U.S. military forces ...,” X post, <https://x.com/Southcom/status/2029011785567572285>.

¹⁰⁰ Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, “Operación ‘Exterminio Total’ Destruye a los Comandos de la Frontera,” March 6, 2026; and Luise Ferré-Sadurní et al., “The U.S. Said It Helped Bomb a Drug Camp. It Was a Dairy Farm.” *New York Times*, March 24, 2026.

¹⁰¹ U.S. Department of State, *Agreement Between the United States of America and Ecuador, Defense: Status of Forces*, signed at Quito October 6, 2023, entered into force February 23, 2024, <https://www.state.gov/ecuador-24-223.1>.

¹⁰² International Foundation for Electoral Systems, “Republic of Ecuador Referendum,” November 16, 2025; and *LatinNews Daily*, “Noem Tours Ecuador Amid Push for U.S. Military Bases,” November 17, 2025.

¹⁰³ *Roll Call*, “Speech: Donald Trump Addresses the Shield of the Americas Summit in Doral, Florida,” March 7, 2026.

¹⁰⁴ DOD, “Americas Counter Cartel Conference Joint Security Declaration,” March 5, 2026.

¹⁰⁵ Gustavo Petro (@petrogustavo), “Creo que hay otra vez un teléfono roto ...,” X post, <https://x.com/petrogustavo/status/2031828237618417789>; and Gobierno de México, “Versión Estenográfica. Conferencia de Prensa de la Presidenta Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo,” March 10, 2026.

In an address to heads of state of 12 of the 16 participating countries at the Shield of the Americas Summit, President Trump asserted that “the heart of our agreement is a commitment to using lethal military force to destroy the sinister cartels and terrorist networks once and for all.”¹⁰⁶ U.S. officials also appeared not to rule out future U.S. unilateral military strikes in the absence of cooperation from regional partners. In an address to regional defense chiefs, U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth stated, “America is prepared to take on these threats and go on the offense alone, if necessary. However, it is our preference, and it is the goal of this conference, that in the interest of this neighborhood, we all do it together with you.”¹⁰⁷

Response to Insecurity in Haiti

Haiti has been mired in multifaceted political, security, and humanitarian crises since the July 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse (2017-2021). In recent years, gangs in Haiti have become autonomous organized groups, many of whom reportedly generate income through extortion, kidnappings, drug trafficking, and arms smuggling. According to the United Nations, gangs control an estimated 80%-90% of the capital city of Port-au-Prince. Between 2022 and March 2026, increasing violence caused by gangs, self-defense groups, and unorganized members of the population, as well as security force operations, caused at least 19,838 deaths and, as of January 2026, the internal displacement of more than 1.4 million Haitians.

The second Trump Administration has supported Haitian-led efforts to confront gangs and insecurity. Among other actions, it has provided continued security assistance to the Haitian National Police and a Kenya-led, UN-authorized Multinational Security Support Mission (MSS). The Administration also has designated some gangs, including Gran Grif and Viv Ansanm, as Foreign Terrorist Organizations and Specially Designated Global Terrorists. At the same time, the Trump Administration has focused on getting other international donors, regional organizations (e.g., the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Caribbean Community), and the United Nations to help stabilize Haiti.

On September 30, 2025, the UN Security Council approved Resolution 2793, sponsored by the United States and Panama, to replace the MSS with a Gang Suppression Force (GSF) in Haiti. The GSF has a 12-month mandate, with an authorized personnel ceiling of 5,550 (consisting of 5,500 uniformed personnel, comprising both military and police personnel, and 50 civilians). An advanced team of Chadian forces arrived in Haiti in early April 2026; Major General Erdenebat Batsuuri from Mongolia, the new Force Commander, arrived in May 2026; and more units are set to arrive in Haiti throughout summer 2026. The GSF’s core objectives include “conducting intelligence-led operations to dismantle armed gangs, securing critical infrastructure, and ensuring humanitarian access, all while protecting the population.” The Bahamas, Canada, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, and Kenya joined with the United States to establish a Standing Group of Partners to provide high-level strategic direction, oversight, and relevant political decisionmaking for the GSF, in consultation with the Haitian government. The OAS is providing training, procuring nonlethal equipment, and supporting the development of forward operating bases to assist the efforts of the GSF and Haitian National Police.

Sources: Jillian Kestler-D’Amours, “Who Are Haiti’s Gangs and What Do They Want? All You Need to Know,” *Al Jazeera*, March 13, 2024; UN Office on Drugs and Crime, “Explainer: Organized Crime and Gang Violence in Haiti,” January 21, 2026; United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti, *Quarterly Report on the Human Rights Situation in Haiti*, January-March 2026; International Organization for Migration, “Displacement Situation in Haiti, Round 12, December 2025,” February 25, 2026; UN Security Council, Resolution 2793 (2025) / adopted by the Security Council at its 10009th meeting, on September 30, 2025; Gang Suppression Force-Haiti, @GSForceHaiti, “Jack Christofides has arrived in Port-au-Prince as Special Representative of the Gang Suppression Force, ...,” X post, April 1, 2026; @GSForceHaiti, “The GSF welcomes Major General Erdenebat Batsuuri as Force Commander...,” X Post, May 14, 2026; Daniel Dickinson, “Fighting Back Against the Gangs: What Is Haiti’s New UN-Backed Force?” *UN News*, October 1, 2025; UN Security Council, Letter dated 27 August 2025 from the Permanent Representative of Haiti to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, S/2025/537, August 28, 2025; OAS, *Report of the Department of Public Security (DPS) on Progress in the Promotion of Hemispheric Cooperation to Address Criminal Gangs*, CP/CSH-2394/26, April 14, 2026.

¹⁰⁶ White House, “President Trump Delivers Remarks at the Shield of the Americas Summit,” March 8, 2026.

¹⁰⁷ DOD, “Remarks by Secretary of War Pete Hegseth at the Americas Counter Cartel Conference (as Delivered),” March 5, 2026.

Legislative Action and Issues for Congressional Consideration

The 119th Congress has debated whether and how to support, shape, or limit the Trump Administration’s approach to countering TCOs in the Western Hemisphere. Moving forward, Congress may continue to do so using its legislative and oversight prerogatives. For example, Congress could seek to guide how U.S. military force is used in the region. Some Members have introduced resolutions pursuant to the War Powers Resolution (P.L. 93-148; 50 U.S.C. Ch. 33) to end hostilities within or against Venezuela (S.J.Res. 90; S.J.Res. 98; H.Con.Res. 64; H.Con.Res. 68) and U.S. lethal strikes against FTOs in the Western Hemisphere (H.Con.Res. 61), unless these actions are specifically authorized by Congress.¹⁰⁸ In addition to considering those or similar resolutions, Congress could prohibit or limit the use of funds for particular military activities in the Western Hemisphere. Alternatively, Congress could authorize the use of military force and/or set specific objectives and parameters for military activities in the region.¹⁰⁹

Congress also could seek to influence how resources are allocated among various U.S. military- and law enforcement-led counternarcotics and anti-crime efforts in the Western Hemisphere. For example, Congress could assess the status and relative effectiveness of defense cooperation and civilian security programming as it considers whether and at what levels to allocate U.S. funds for those efforts. Such an assessment could include DOD security cooperation programs authorized under Title 10 of the *U.S. Code*, including DOD’s main “train and equip” authority, Section 333 on “Building Partner Capacity.” It also could include security assistance programs managed by the Department of State authorized under Title 22 of the *U.S. Code*, including those funded through INCLE. Congress also could assess the results and relative effectiveness of military action against alleged TCO targets. In addition, Congress could assess whether U.S.-led drug interdiction efforts are adequately funded and at what levels to appropriate funds for those activities in future years. In its annual posture statements before Congress, SOUTHCOM leaders have stated that, due to resource constraints, SOUTHCOM and its partners have been able to act on only a portion of suspected maritime illicit narcotics shipments (9% in 2024).¹¹⁰

Additionally, Congress could assess whether to attach conditions to U.S. security assistance and security cooperation related to advancing partner country cooperation, human rights, or other congressional objectives. In successive appropriations cycles, for example, Congress has required the State Department to withhold some security assistance allocated to some Central American governments until the Secretary of State certifies that those governments have met conditions related to human rights, corruption, law enforcement, and other issues.¹¹¹ In the FY2026 NSRP appropriations legislation (P.L. 119-75, Division F), Congress conditioned some international security assistance for Colombia and Mexico on those governments’ cooperation on counternarcotics and security issues.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ For more information, see CRS In Focus IF13134, *Understanding the War Powers Resolution*, by Matthew C. Weed.

¹⁰⁹ For more information on Congress’s constitutional authority regarding the use of military force, see CRS Legal Sidebar LSB11232, *The Declare War Clause, Part 3: Authorizations for Use of Military Force and Debate over Initiating Military Action*, by Steve P. Mulligan.

¹¹⁰ SOUTHCOM, “Statement of Admiral Alvin Holsey,” p. 25.

¹¹¹ Most recently, Section 7045(b)(2) of the FY2026 NSRP appropriations legislation (P.L. 119-75, Division F) directs the State Department to withhold 50% of National Security Investment Programs and security assistance allocated to the central governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras until the Secretary of State certifies that those governments are adhering to 10 conditions regarding combatting corruption, strengthening the rule of law, protecting human rights, and cooperating with the United States on migration and security.

¹¹² Sections 7045(c)(2) and 7045(h)(2) of P.L. 119-75, Division F.

The 118th and the 119th Congresses also enacted some reporting requirements in authorizing legislation relating to U.S. security policy in the Western Hemisphere. In Section 1013 of the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (P.L. 118-159), for example, Congress directed the Secretary of Defense to commission an independent analysis of the governance structure and strategy of DOD’s counternarcotics and counter-TCO activities. According to the provision’s timeline, the report was to be submitted to Congress by late April 2026. Section 1274 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 (P.L. 119-60) directs the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Mexican government, to submit a report to Congress regarding joint training with Mexico to counter TCOs.¹¹³ Congress could assess whether it needs additional information on these or other aspects of U.S. security policy, such as how DOD, the State Department, and other federal agencies prioritize activities in the Western Hemisphere in line with the 2025 NSS, how the agencies coordinate their efforts, and how the U.S. government evaluates to what extent this approach has advanced the NSS’s stated objectives.

More broadly, Congress could use its oversight prerogative to assess the United States’ role in factors that drive drug trafficking and TCO-driven violence in the Western Hemisphere, including related to firearms trafficking and illicit drug demand. According to a 2024 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, for example, about 73% of firearms recovered in the Caribbean between 2018 and 2022 that were analyzed by the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives were sourced from the United States.¹¹⁴ Some observers, including the congressionally created Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Commission (P.L. 114-323, Title VI), have argued that the U.S. government should prioritize efforts to treat and prevent drug abuse in the United States and abroad to decrease demand for illicit narcotics.¹¹⁵

Migration Policy

The United States is a destination for Western Hemisphere emigrants, both authorized and unauthorized, due to factors such as geographic proximity, familial ties, and economic opportunities, among others. In 2023, about 25.3 million immigrants from the Western Hemisphere resided in the United States, representing 53% of the U.S. foreign-born population.¹¹⁶ According to Pew Research Center estimates, about 10.6 million (42%) of those immigrants lacked authorization.¹¹⁷ Historically, Mexico, the country of origin for about 23% of the U.S. foreign-born population in 2023,¹¹⁸ has been the dominant source of U.S.-bound migration flows and the principal focus of U.S. cooperation and enforcement efforts.

Although migration management has been a component of U.S. relations with Mexico for at least three decades, U.S. foreign policy has placed increased emphasis on regional migration

¹¹³ Other country-specific security reporting requirements for countries in the Western Hemisphere enacted in P.L. 119-60 include Sections 1274, 6717, 8313(b)(10), and 8365, which relate to Mexico, and Section 8139, which relates to Haiti.

¹¹⁴ U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Agencies Have Anti-Trafficking Efforts in Place, But State Could Better Assess Activities*, GAO-25-107007, October 2024.

¹¹⁵ Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Commission, *Report of the Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Commission*, December 2020, p. 22.

¹¹⁶ U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, “Place of Birth for the Foreign-Born Population in the United States,” American Community Survey, 2023 ACS 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B05006, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT1Y2023.B05006>, accessed on May 22, 2026.

¹¹⁷ Jeffrey S. Passel and Jens Manuel Krogstad, “U.S. Unauthorized Immigrant Population Reached a Record 14 Million in 2023,” Pew Research Center, August 21, 2025.

¹¹⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, “Place of Birth for the Foreign-Born Population in the United States.”

management since at least 2014. Regional efforts intensified as an increasing number of migrants from countries throughout the Western Hemisphere and beyond have sought entry into the United States. Other countries in the Western Hemisphere also have contended with increased migration, due in part to nearly 7.9 million people leaving Venezuela between 2014 and 2024 as a result of the country's economic crises and the government's repression.¹¹⁹

Over the past decade, consecutive U.S. Administrations and Congresses have responded to migration challenges by allocating foreign assistance to address underlying drivers in the region, diplomatically engaging partners—particularly Mexico and Colombia—to increase burden-sharing, and enacting domestic policy changes intended to deter unauthorized migrants.¹²⁰ In FY2024, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) encountered 2.1 million migrants at the U.S. southwest border, nearly 90% of whom originated in the Western Hemisphere.¹²¹ The FY2024 encounter level was the lowest total recorded since FY2021 following a post-pandemic surge in migration but still was double the level recorded during the FY2015-FY2019 period.¹²² Monthly encounters declined after the Biden Administration implemented a rule in June 2024 that at times restricted entry into the United States and access to asylum at the southern border.¹²³

Second Trump Administration Approach and Regional Response

The second Trump Administration has placed migration issues at the center of its approach to the Western Hemisphere. The 2025 NSS asserts that the “era of mass migration must end” and states that the Administration will seek partners in the Western Hemisphere to help the United States “stop illegal and destabilizing migration.”¹²⁴ The State Department's *Agency Strategic Plan: Fiscal Years 2026-2030* states that “remigration and border security are central to [the agency's] diplomatic engagements,” especially in the Western Hemisphere.¹²⁵

Policies to Restrict Asylum, End Discretionary Protection Programs, and Bolster Interior Enforcement

The Trump Administration has taken numerous executive actions and initiatives to counter unauthorized migration. On January 20, 2025, President Trump issued presidential proclamations suspending the entry of unauthorized migrants at the southern and northern borders, including nearly all asylum seekers, in response to what he described as an “invasion” by migrants.¹²⁶ President Trump also ended use of the CBP One application, a tool the Biden Administration created to manage appointments for asylum seekers at ports of entry, thereby canceling the appointments of tens of thousands of migrants from various countries who were waiting in

¹¹⁹ R4V Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela, “Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants,” December 3, 2024.

¹²⁰ For more information, see CRS In Focus IF12538, *U.S. Efforts to Manage Western Hemisphere Migration Flows*, by Clare Ribando Seelke and Peter J. Meyer.

¹²¹ U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), “Nationwide Encounters” database, accessed March 16, 2026, <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/nationwide-encounters>.

¹²² U.S. CBP, “Southwest Border Migration YTD2021” database, accessed April 15, 2026, <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/sw-border-migration-YTD> November.

¹²³ CRS Insight IN12457, *The Biden Administration's Revised Proclamation and Final Rule, “Securing the Border”*, by Audrey Singer.

¹²⁴ White House, *National Security Strategy*, pp. 11 and 16.

¹²⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Agency Strategic Plan: Fiscal Years 2026-2030*, p. 5.

¹²⁶ Presidential Proclamation 10888 of January 20, 2025, “Guaranteeing the States Protection Against Invasion,” 90 *Federal Register* 8333, January 29, 2025.

Mexico.¹²⁷ CBP One has been transformed into CBP Home, a self-deportation application managed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS).¹²⁸ Additionally, the Administration has expanded the U.S. military's involvement in border security, including in new National Defense Areas established to secure federal lands along the southern border.¹²⁹

The Administration has ended discretionary programs that had provided relief from removal and work authorization for hundreds of thousands of migrants. The Administration terminated a parole program for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans (CHNV) established during the Biden Administration;¹³⁰ ended the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) of certain Venezuelans; and announced TPS terminations for Haiti, Honduras, and Nicaragua.¹³¹ In June 2025, CBP began implementing a presidential proclamation intended to bar U.S. entry for most categories of travelers from Cuba, Haiti, and Venezuela due to stated concerns about their capacity to screen and vet migrants and high visa overstay rates.¹³²

The Administration has stepped up interior enforcement efforts aimed at increasing removals. On January 21, 2026, a DHS press release asserted that 675,000 unauthorized migrants had been removed during President Trump's first year in office and that more than 2 million others had voluntarily left the country, some using the Administration's CBP Home mobile application.¹³³ Unlike during prior U.S. Administrations, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has not released monthly removal statistics to corroborate its press releases.¹³⁴ According to data compiled by the TRAC Clearinghouse at Syracuse University, ICE reportedly removed some 234,211 migrants from January to September 2025.¹³⁵ It is unclear how many of these migrants originated in Western Hemisphere countries.

¹²⁷ CRS Insight IN12166, *CBP One Application: Evolution and Functionality*, by Abigail F. Kolker and Kristin Finklea; E.O. 14165 of January 20, 2025, "Securing Our Borders," 90 *Federal Register* 8467, January 30, 2025; and Doctors Without Borders, "Lives in Limbo After CBP One Closure in Mexico," January 31, 2025.

¹²⁸ CRS In Focus IF13030, *The CBP Home Mobile Application and "Self-Departure"*, by Audrey Singer and William A. Kandel.

¹²⁹ White House, "Military Mission for Sealing the Southern Border of the United States and Repelling Invasions," Presidential Memorandum/NSPM-4, April 11, 2025; and NORTHCOM, "DoW Support to U.S. Border Security, National Defense Areas," <https://www.northcom.mil/BorderSecurity/#national-defense-areas>.

¹³⁰ For more information, see CRS Report R46570, *Immigration Parole*, by Andorra Bruno.

¹³¹ Department of Homeland Security (DHS), "DHS Issues Notices of Termination for the CHNV Parole Program, Encourages Parolees to Self-Deport Immediately," June 12, 2025. Temporary Protected Status (TPS) termination determinations have not taken effect for Haiti, Honduras, and Nicaragua due to litigation. For more information on TPS, see DHS, U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services, "Temporary Protected Status," <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status>; and CRS Report RS20844, *Temporary Protected Status and Deferred Enforced Departure*, by Jill H. Wilson.

¹³² A December 2025 proclamation maintained those restrictions and added restrictions on immigrant and non-immigrant visas for Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica. Presidential Proclamation 10949 of June 4, 2025, "Restricting the Entry of Foreign Nationals to Protect the United States from Foreign Terrorists and Other National Security and Public Safety Threats," 90 *Federal Register* 24497, June 10, 2025; and Presidential Proclamation 10998 of December 16, 2025, "Restricting and Limiting the Entry of Foreign Nationals to Protect the Security of the United States," 90 *Federal Register* 59717, December 19, 2025.

¹³³ DHS, "Celebrating One Year of Trump: DHS Now Offering \$2,600 Stipend Via the CBP Home App for Illegal Aliens to Leave Now," January 21, 2026.

¹³⁴ For FY2024 and years prior, see U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, "Removal Statistics," <https://www.ice.gov/statistics>.

¹³⁵ TRAC Clearinghouse at Syracuse University, *Taking Stock: Trump Administration Record on Detention and Removals*, November 24, 2025, <https://tracreports.org/reports/767/>.

Regional Cooperation on U.S. Removals of Unauthorized Migrants

The Trump Administration has negotiated new and expanded migration-related agreements with Mexico and several other countries in the region, using various policy tools to elicit cooperation. In January 2025, for example, the Administration threatened to impose tariffs on Colombian imports and sanctions on Colombian officials, among other repercussions, after President Gustavo Petro initially refused to receive a U.S. military aircraft transporting Colombian deportees.¹³⁶ Since that incident and the aforementioned imposition of border security-related tariffs on Mexico in February 2025, most Western Hemisphere governments appear to have cooperated with the Administration on migration-related matters.

In January 2025, DHS announced the restart of the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), which allowed U.S. officials to return migrants to Mexico to await U.S. immigration proceedings. The agreement previously had been implemented from 2019 to 2021 but was subject to legal challenges.¹³⁷ The Mexican government has not publicly agreed to accept non-Mexicans under MPP. Nevertheless, in each year since 2023, Mexico reportedly has received an average of 10,000 migrants sent by the United States from third countries, many without identity documents or ties to Mexico.¹³⁸ At a December 10, 2025 press conference, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum (2024-present) said the Mexican government had received some 140,700 Mexican nationals deported or returned and nearly 11,900 non-Mexicans from the United States since President Trump took office. Since 2025, U.S. funding cuts to humanitarian agencies such as the UN Refugee Agency reportedly have weakened asylum and shelter systems in Mexico.¹³⁹

The Trump Administration also has established various agreements or arrangements related to removals with other governments in the Western Hemisphere, including through executive agreements or nonbinding instruments such as memoranda of understanding. These include

- agreements to accept increased deportation flights from the United States (Guatemala and Venezuela);¹⁴⁰
- agreements to accept certain migrants from a third country who have been deported from the United States (e.g., Antigua and Barbuda, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Panama, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia);¹⁴¹

¹³⁶ President Donald J. Trump, Truth Social Post, January 26, 2025, <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/113896070273857964>.

¹³⁷ DHS, “DHS Reinstates Migrant Protection Protocols, Allowing Officials to Return Applicants to Neighboring Countries,” January 21, 2025.

¹³⁸ Rachel Schmidtke and Yael Schacher, *Protection, Not Concession: Mexico’s Responsibility to Third Country Nationals Deported by the United States*, Refugees International, February 27, 2026.

¹³⁹ Eric Reidy, “‘City of Forced Waiting’: Stuck at Mexico’s Southern Border,” *The New Humanitarian*, February 24, 2026.

¹⁴⁰ U.S. Department of State, “Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Guatemalan President Bernardo Arévalo at a Joint Press Availability, February 5, 2025; Reuters, “Venezuela, U.S. Agree to Resume Flights of Deported Migrants,” March 13, 2025.

¹⁴¹ Ariel G. Ruiz Soto, *U.S. Third-Country Deportation Agreements Are More About Fear Than Numbers*, Migration Policy Institute, March 2026. According to press reports, the United States also has concluded agreements with the governments of Grenada and the Dominican Republic and is negotiating an agreement with the government of Guyana. *Grenadianlife*, “Grenada Signs Agreement to Accept Third Country Deportees from the United States,” January 27, 2026; *Dominican Today*, “U.S. Embassy Details New Third-Country Migration Agreement with the Dominican Republic,” May 21, 2026; and Joanne Clark, “Guyana in Talks with U.S. on Accepting Third-Country Nationals,” *Caribbean National Weekly*, January 6, 2026.

- Safe Third Country Agreements to allow the U.S. government to transfer some asylum seekers to third countries to pursue their asylum claims there (e.g., Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Ecuador, Paraguay),¹⁴² and
- arrangements to incarcerate third-country migrants deported from the United States who are alleged to be criminals (e.g., El Salvador).¹⁴³

Many of these agreements have prompted legal challenges and raised humanitarian concerns.¹⁴⁴ The International Organization for Migration (IOM) provides basic supplies and voluntary flights home for migrants who IOM assesses can return safely. IOM and other humanitarian agencies that assist repatriated migrants and migrants seeking to integrate into other countries in the region (such as Venezuelans in Colombia) reportedly have scaled back services due to U.S. foreign assistance cuts.¹⁴⁵ Such reductions in international support reportedly have strained the already limited capacities of some Central American governments to receive increasing numbers of deportees.¹⁴⁶

The IACHR has expressed concerns about many of the Trump Administration's immigration policies. The IACHR recognizes that governments have the authority to determine their own immigration policies but has called on the U.S. government to "provide adequate conditions of return, to prevent forced removals that fail to assess potential needs for international protection, and to uphold due process guarantees, particularly in proceedings that may result in deportation."¹⁴⁷ The IACHR also has held hearings on U.S. deportations and transfers of third-country migrants.¹⁴⁸

Shifts in Regional Migration Patterns

Since February 2025, unauthorized crossings at the U.S. southern border appear to have fallen to levels not seen since the 1970s, even as crises in Cuba, Haiti, Venezuela, and elsewhere have

¹⁴² For background, see CRS Legal Sidebar LSB10402, *Safe Third Country Agreements with Northern Triangle Countries: Background and Legal Issues*, by Ben Harrington. DHS, "Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Honduras for Cooperation in the Examination of Protection Requests," 90 *Federal Register* 30076, July 8, 2025; DHS, "Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Guatemala Relating to the Transfer of Nationals of Central American Countries to Guatemala," 90 *Federal Register* 31670, July 15, 2025; DHS, "Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Ecuador Relating to the Transfer of Third-Country Nationals to Ecuador," 90 *Federal Register* 51376, November 17, 2025; DHS, "Agreement Between the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Department of State and the Paraguayan National Commission for Stateless Persons and Refugees," 90 *Federal Register* 60114, December 23, 2025; DHS, "Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Belize for Cooperation Regarding the Examination of Protection Requests," 91 *Federal Register* 12204, March 12, 2026.

¹⁴³ U.S. Department of State, "Understanding Between the United States of America and the Republic of El Salvador Relating to the Transfer of Members of Terrorist Organizations: Exchange of Notes March 13 and 14, 2025, with a Related U.S. Note Dated March 31, 2025," Case Act No. 2025-0001CQN.

¹⁴⁴ For legal challenges, see the "Immigration and Citizenship" section of *Just Security*, "Litigation Tracker: Legal Challenges to Trump Administration Actions," March 2, 2026, <https://www.justsecurity.org/107087/tracker-litigation-legal-challenges-trump-administration/>.

¹⁴⁵ Lawrence Huang et al., "Can Innovation Help Blunt the Impact of Foreign Aid Cuts on Migration Management Programs?" Migration Policy Institute, April 2025.

¹⁴⁶ Ana Martín Gil et. al., *U.S. Immigration Policies and Migration in Transit Countries*, Baker Institute, March 23, 2026.

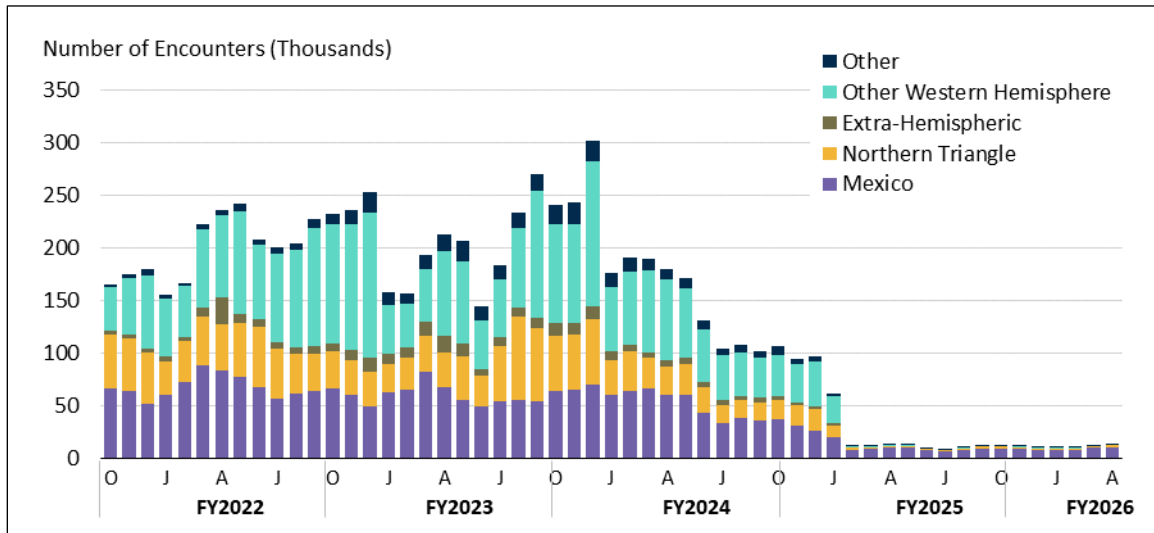
¹⁴⁷ IACHR, "IACHR Concerned over United States' Measures That Impact the Effective Exercise of Human Rights," March 31, 2025.

¹⁴⁸ IACHR, "Regional Situation of Persons Deported, Expelled or Transferred in the Context of Human Mobility," 195th Period of Sessions, Hearing No. 19, March 11, 2026.

continued. Between February 2025 and January 2026, CBP encountered about 132,500 migrants at the southern border; migrants from the Western Hemisphere comprised 95% of that total. According to CBP data, the total number of migrants encountered by CBP at the southern border during this period was 91% lower than it was during the prior 12 months (February 2024 to January 2025; see **Figure 4**).

As unauthorized crossings at the U.S. southern border have declined, observers assert Mexico’s southern border has become a crowded “chokepoint” for migrants repatriated or formally removed from the United States or northern Mexico and for migrants seeking protection in Mexico.¹⁴⁹ Migration patterns have reversed in other portions of the region, with some Venezuelans and other migrants seeking to return to their countries of origin. Within South America, several governments have tightened access to asylum and protection and have stepped up their migration-enforcement efforts.¹⁵⁰ Given that migration historically has served as a pressure-release valve—enabling political dissidents and discouraged workers to seek freedom and opportunity elsewhere while sending back remittances to support those who remain behind—U.S. and regional policies reducing migration options could contribute to increased political and economic turbulence in the region’s historically migrant-sending countries.

Figure 4. U.S. Southern Border Encounters of Migrants, FY2022-FY2026



Source: Created by CRS using data from U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), “Nationwide Encounters,” accessed May 21, 2026, <https://www.cbp.gov/document/stats/nationwide-encounters>.

Notes: CBP generally provides the top 22 countries of origin for migrants who have been encountered. This graphic defines subregions based on that list. For this graphic, “Northern Triangle” includes El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras; “Extra-Hemispheric” includes countries outside the Western Hemisphere (e.g., China, India, Russia); “Other Western Hemisphere” includes other Western countries listed (i.e., Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Haiti, Nicaragua, Peru, and Venezuela); “Other” is any nationality not part of the top 22 listed nationalities.

¹⁴⁹ Reidy, “City of Forced Waiting.”

¹⁵⁰ UN Refugee Agency, World Food Program, and UN Children’s Fund, *Mixed Movements Monitoring Report*, Q3 2025, February 3, 2026.

Legislative Action and Issues for Congressional Consideration

The 119th Congress has helped shape the Administration's migration policies through its funding decisions. In July 2025, Congress enacted P.L. 119-21, the FY2025 budget reconciliation law commonly known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. That law provided a significant increase in funds for U.S. interior immigration enforcement and border security. It also imposed a 1% tax on remittance transfers, which are a key component of many Latin American and Caribbean economies.¹⁵¹ The tax entered into effect on January 1, 2026.

The FY2026 NSRP legislation provided \$5.4 billion through a new International Humanitarian Assistance (IHA) account for international disaster relief and refugee and migration assistance worldwide. The act did not designate a funding level for the Western Hemisphere. The accompanying explanatory statement, however, asserted that the act included funds to support Latin American and Caribbean governments' efforts to resettle migrants, "including through policy reforms, capacity building and technical assistance, and enhanced community integration and economic development."¹⁵² Section 7045(f) of the FY2026 NSRP legislation prohibited the use of funds "to encourage, mobilize, publicize, or manage mass-migration caravans toward the United States southwest border" but stated that the prohibition "shall not be construed to preclude the provision of humanitarian assistance."¹⁵³

Congress may continue to influence U.S. migration policy in the Western Hemisphere through its consideration of the Trump Administration's FY2027 budget proposal. The Administration requested \$4 billion through the IHA account to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees and migrants abroad, fund voluntary returns, incentivize governments to implement Safe Third Country Agreements, and build other countries' migration management capacities, among other activities.¹⁵⁴ Congress could consider whether and at what levels to fund IHA activities, including in the Western Hemisphere. Congress also could consider whether to restrict or place conditions on the types of activities that may be funded in the region. Such decisions could be informed, in part, by findings from a State Department report to the Appropriations Committees, required by the explanatory statement accompanying the FY2026 NSRP legislation, which is to detail "opportunities to deter unlawful migration flows from reaching the United States by assisting partner governments in the Western Hemisphere with diplomatic efforts and assistance programs that enable successful resettlement in host and transit countries."¹⁵⁵

Congress may continue to consider legislative initiatives to modify or codify aspects of the Administration's migration policies in the Western Hemisphere. On April 16, 2026, the House passed H.R. 1689, a measure that would direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to designate Haiti for TPS. Congress also could consider designating other Western Hemisphere countries for TPS or humanitarian parole. Other bills that have been introduced would reform the TPS process by requiring an act of Congress to grant TPS rather than a designation from DHS (H.R. 696/S. 225). Among other actions to codify portions of the Administration's approach, Congress could

¹⁵¹ P.L. 119-21, §70604; and Inter-American Development Bank, *Remittances to Latin America and the Caribbean in 2025: Adaptations in a Context of Uncertainty*, Technical Note N° IDB-TN-3243, November 2025.

¹⁵² Explanatory Statement Submitted by Mr. Cole, Chair of the House Committee on Appropriations, Regarding H.R. 7006, Financial Services and General Government and National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2026, *Congressional Record*, vol. 172, no. 10 (January 14, 2026), p. H867.

¹⁵³ The explanatory statement directs that "humanitarian assistance for migrants shall not include: (1) cash cards that are usable in countries other than where they are provided; (2) legal counselling on the United States asylum process; or (3) referrals to legal representation in the United States." Explanatory Statement Submitted by Mr. Cole, H867.

¹⁵⁴ U.S. Department of State, *FY2027 Congressional Budget Justification*, p. 96.

¹⁵⁵ Explanatory Statement Submitted by Mr. Cole, H868.

consider amending the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) to restrict the ability to apply for and be granted asylum (e.g., H.R. 2, which passed the House during the 118th Congress), or it could enact legislation to authorize the MPP with Mexico (e.g., H.R. 551/S. 112) and/or Safe Third Country Agreements with other countries in the region. Conversely, Congress could seek to expand access to asylum under the INA or restrict or prohibit the use of MPP and/or third-country repatriations.

Some Members of Congress have conducted oversight of the Administration's migration policies, including in the Western Hemisphere, through hearings and committee reports.¹⁵⁶ Some Members also have introduced resolutions, pursuant to Section 502B of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (22 U.S.C. §2304), which would require the State Department to provide a report within 30 days of adoption on human rights practices in certain countries, including the treatment of third-country migrants transferred from the United States (e.g., S.Res. 353 on Costa Rica, H.Res. 368/S.Res. 195 on El Salvador, S.Res. 636 on Guatemala, S.Res. 633 on Honduras, S.Res. 356 on Mexico, and S.Res. 354 on Panama). If no such report is provided, "no security assistance shall be delivered to such country except as may thereafter be specifically authorized by law ... unless and until such statement is transmitted."¹⁵⁷ Congress could seek additional information on the Administration's migration policies in the Western Hemisphere by directing inspectors general at relevant agencies or GAO to conduct investigations.

Trade Policy

In previous decades, the United States used trade policy to promote economic development in the Western Hemisphere; raise trading partners' standards in areas such as labor, the environment, and intellectual property rights; and develop markets for U.S. exports.¹⁵⁸ The U.S. Constitution empowers Congress to set import tariffs, a power that Congress has partially delegated to the President.¹⁵⁹ U.S. trade with most Western Hemisphere countries is conducted under the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO).¹⁶⁰ Under the WTO's *most-favored-nation* (MFN) rule, a country must extend any trade concession, such as reduced tariffs, granted to one member to all other WTO members; there are limited exceptions, such as preferential rates for free-trade agreements (FTAs) and special treatment for developing countries (see below).

Trade Agreements

In 1934, Congress began to authorize the President to enter into trade agreements with foreign countries and proclaim changes to U.S. tariff rates.¹⁶¹ Known as the Reciprocal Trade Agreements

¹⁵⁶ See, as an example, U.S. Congress, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *At What Cost? Inside the Trump Administration's Secret Deportation Deals*, minority report, 119th Cong., 2nd sess., February 17, 2026.

¹⁵⁷ 22 U.S.C. §2304(c)(3). For more information, see CRS In Focus IF11197, *U.S. Arms Sales and Human Rights: Legislative Basis and Frequently Asked Questions*, by Paul K. Kerr and Michael A. Weber.

¹⁵⁸ See, for example, U.S. Congress, House Committee on Ways and Means, *North American Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act*, report to accompany H.R. 3450, 103rd Cong., 1st sess., H.Rept. 103-361, November 15, 1993, p. 9; E.O. 13191 of January 17, 2001, "Implementation of the African Growth and Opportunity Act and the United States-Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act," 66 *Federal Register* 7271, January 22, 2001; and U.S. Congress, House Committee on Ways and Means, *Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act*, report to accompany H.R. 3045, 109th Cong., 1st sess., H.Rept. 109-182, July 25, 2005, p. 26.

¹⁵⁹ For more information, see CRS In Focus IF11030, *U.S. Tariff Policy: Overview*, by Christopher A. Casey; and CRS Report R48435, *Congressional and Presidential Authority to Impose Import Tariffs*, by Christopher T. Zirpoli.

¹⁶⁰ For more on the WTO, see CRS In Focus IF10002, *World Trade Organization*, by Cathleen D. Cimino-Isaacs.

¹⁶¹ P.L. 73-316, 48 Stat. 943 (1934).

Act of 1934, it would become the legislative centerpiece of congressional trade policy in the 20th century.¹⁶² During the first decade after enactment, U.S. Presidents entered into trade agreements with 15 of 22 independent countries in the Western Hemisphere.¹⁶³

The Western Hemisphere remained central to U.S. trade policy as the United States shifted away from bilateral reciprocal trade agreements and toward more comprehensive FTAs in the 1980s and 1990s. Nearly half of all comprehensive U.S. FTAs are with partners in the region.¹⁶⁴ The United States currently has six FTAs in force covering 12 countries in the Americas (see **Table 2**). In 2025, these FTA partners accounted for 28% of U.S. goods and services exports and 27% of U.S. goods and services imports.¹⁶⁵ Among these FTAs, the 2020 United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), which replaced the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), is by far the largest in terms of covered total U.S. trade.

Table 2. U.S. Free-Trade Agreements (FTAs) in the Western Hemisphere

U.S. FTA	Implementing Legislation	FTA Entry into Force	Trade Promotion Authority (TPA)
U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) ^a	P.L. 116-113	July 2020	Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 (P.L. 114-26)
Panama	P.L. 112-43	October 2012	Trade Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-210)
Colombia	P.L. 112-42	May 2012	Trade Act of 2002
Peru	P.L. 110-138	February 2009	Trade Act of 2002
Dominican Republic-Central America FTA (CAFTA-DR) ^b	P.L. 109-53	Entry into force by country, 2006-2009	Trade Act of 2002
Chile	P.L. 108-77	January 2004	Trade Act of 2002

Sources: Compiled from the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative’s website, Congress.gov, and CRS Report R45846, *Congressional Votes on Free Trade Agreements and Trade Promotion Authority*, by Keigh E. Hammond.

Notes:

- a. USMCA superseded the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA); NAFTA had superseded the 1988 U.S.-Canada FTA.
- b. Entry into force by country on rolling basis: El Salvador (March 2006), Honduras and Nicaragua (April 2006), Guatemala (July 2006), the Dominican Republic (March 2007), and Costa Rica (January 2009).

Congress approved and enacted implementing legislation to bring these U.S. FTAs into force under rules set out in trade promotion authority (TPA) statutes. Under TPA, Congress establishes trade negotiating objectives in key areas, as well as consultation and notification requirements for

¹⁶² See Douglas Irwin, *Clashing over Commerce: A History of U.S. Trade Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), Part III; Michael A. Bailey, Judith Goldstein and Barry R. Weingast, “The Institutional Roots of American Trade Policy: Politics, Coalitions, and International Trade,” *World Politics*, vol. 49, no. 3 (1997), pp. 309-338.

¹⁶³ U.S. Department of Commerce, *Foreign Commerce Weekly*, March 16, 1946, p. 31.

¹⁶⁴ For a list of U.S. free-trade agreements (FTAs), see <https://ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements>. FTAs typically cover “substantially all trade” between FTA partners, with market access commitments on trade in goods, agriculture, and services and various rules including on investment, technical barriers to trade, intellectual property rights, labor and environmental standards, and dispute settlement.

¹⁶⁵ CRS calculations based on U.S. international trade in goods and services by area and country data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, accessed April 7, 2026.

the executive branch during trade negotiations.¹⁶⁶ Some Members of Congress played key roles in shaping certain commitments and outcomes in U.S. FTAs with Western Hemisphere partners.

Since 2020, U.S. Administrations have not pursued the negotiation of comprehensive FTAs akin to USMCA. For non-FTA partners in the region, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) maintains various bilateral and plurilateral trade dialogues and cooperative mechanisms to discuss trade issues. For example, the United States has trade and investment framework agreements (TIFAs) or trade and investment council agreements (TICs) with Argentina, Brazil, the Caribbean Community, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Uruguay.¹⁶⁷ In 2020, the first Trump Administration also negotiated Protocols on Trade Rules and Transparency with Brazil and Ecuador, which include commitments on trade facilitation and customs administration, good regulatory practices, and anti-corruption measures.

Trade Preference Programs

Trade preference programs provide duty-free U.S. market access to eligible goods from beneficiary developing countries without requiring reciprocal trade concessions, unlike comprehensive FTAs. Beneficiary developing countries, however, are required to meet specific eligibility criteria. Congress authorizes trade preference programs in specific laws and usually extends them for specific periods. The largest U.S. trade preference program was the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), which Congress first authorized in 1974 and reauthorized several times before the program lapsed at the end of 2020.¹⁶⁸ At the time of expiration, 12 Western Hemisphere countries were eligible for GSP benefits. Several bills that would have reauthorized and modified GSP have been introduced, though none has passed to date. In addition to GSP, some Western Hemisphere countries have been beneficiaries of region-specific preference programs, as described below.

Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI). CBI is a collection of preference programs for eligible Caribbean countries.¹⁶⁹ The first Caribbean-specific preference program was created in 1983 under the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (CBERA) and made permanent in 1990.¹⁷⁰ In 2000, Congress expanded the program to include import-sensitive products that were excluded under CBERA, such as more apparel, petroleum, and other products under the Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act (CBTPA); CBTPA is scheduled to expire on September 30, 2030.¹⁷¹ The Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity Through Partnership Encouragement (HOPE) Act of 2006 (amended in 2008 and 2010) provides additional preferences with flexible rules-of-origin requirements to U.S. imports of apparel from Haiti and is authorized through December 2026.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁶ See, for example, Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act, P.L. 114-26, §103(b), 129 Stat. 319, 334 (2015); and CRS In Focus IF10038, *Trade Promotion Authority (TPA)*, by Christopher A. Casey and Cathleen D. Cimino-Isaacs.

¹⁶⁷ Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), “Trade and Investment Framework Agreements.” According to USTR, these agreements “provide strategic frameworks and principles for dialogue on trade and investment issues between the United States and the other parties.”

¹⁶⁸ At the time of expiration, the Generalized System of Preferences provided 119 eligible developing countries with duty-free market access to the United States for about 3,500 products. For more information, see CRS In Focus IF11232, *Generalized System of Preferences (GSP): FAQ*, by Liana Wong.

¹⁶⁹ For more information on the Caribbean Basin Initiative, see CRS Report R47432, *Caribbean Trade Preference Programs*, by Liana Wong and M. Angeles Villarreal.

¹⁷⁰ P.L. 98-67; P.L. 101-382, §211.

¹⁷¹ P.L. 98-67 and P.L. 116-164.

¹⁷² Title V of P.L. 109-432; Title XV of P.L. 110-234; P.L. 111-171; and P.L. 119-75, §5020.

Andean Trade Preferences Act (ATPA). Created in 1991, the ATPA was part of a broader U.S. initiative with Andean countries to address the illicit drug trade by supporting legitimate economic activities.¹⁷³ The program, which extended duty-free treatment to certain U.S. imports from Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, was reauthorized and extended several times until it expired in 2013. At the time of the program’s expiration, Ecuador was the only remaining beneficiary country.¹⁷⁴

Second Trump Administration Approach and Regional Response

The second Trump Administration has pursued an “America-First Trade Policy,” which it states is aimed at addressing the U.S. trade deficit, caused by what it argues is “a lack of effective reciprocity in our global trading system.”¹⁷⁵ To promote greater reciprocity and/or lower foreign tariffs and nontariff barriers, the Administration has imposed tariffs and pursued bilateral negotiations and other initiatives, including with Western Hemisphere partners. The Administration has promoted the use of U.S. federal government agencies to increase trade and investment financing in key sectors and regions, including in the Western Hemisphere. At times, the Administration has used tariffs and other trade policy actions to advance security and political objectives in the region (see “Counternarcotics and Transnational Crime” and “Political Engagement”).

Other Western Hemisphere governments have responded to the Administration’s trade policies in various ways. Nearly all governments in the region appear to have entered into trade discussions with the Administration, seeking tariff reductions and exceptions, and a few governments have negotiated new trade arrangements with the United States (see “Executive Trade Agreements”). The Canadian and Mexican governments have taken steps to address some of the Administration’s trade policy concerns while seeking to maintain the USMCA through a joint review process (see “USMCA Joint Review”).¹⁷⁶ Canada’s federal and provincial governments also have imposed some retaliatory tariffs and other measures against U.S. imports.¹⁷⁷ The Brazilian government has considered—but not yet taken—retaliatory trade measures against the United States and has requested dispute consultations at the WTO.¹⁷⁸ Some Western Hemisphere governments have placed renewed emphasis on trade diversification, seeking, in part, to reduce their reliance on the U.S. market.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷³ Title II of P.L. 102-182.

¹⁷⁴ Bolivia’s designation as a beneficiary country was terminated in 2008 after President George W. Bush determined the country did not meet eligibility criteria due to its lack of cooperation on counternarcotics efforts (Proclamation 8323 of November 25, 2008, “To Provide for Duty-Free Treatment Under the Earned Import Allowance Program, and for Other Purposes,” 73 *Federal Register* 72677, November 28, 2008). Peru and Colombia designations were terminated upon entry into force of their U.S. FTAs in 2009 and 2012, respectively (P.L. 110-138 and P.L. 112-42).

¹⁷⁵ USTR, *The President’s 2026 Trade Policy Agenda*, March 2, 2026, pp. 1-2.

¹⁷⁶ See, for example, Government of Canada, Department of Finance Canada, “Canada Rescinds Digital Services Tax to Advance Broader Trade Negotiations with the United States,” June 29, 2025; and Jude Webber, “Mexico Imposes Tariffs of up to 50% on Chinese Goods,” *Financial Times*, December 11, 2025.

¹⁷⁷ For more information, see CRS In Focus IF12595, *U.S.-Canada Trade Relations*, by Kyla H. Kitamura.

¹⁷⁸ Pedro Peduzzi, “Brazil Moves to Use Reciprocity Law Against U.S.,” Agência Brasil, August 29, 2025; and WTO, “Dispute Settlement, DS640: United States – Tariff Measures on Goods from Brazil,” https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/cases_e/ds640_e.htm.

¹⁷⁹ See, for example, Prime Minister of Canada, “Prime Minister Carney Advances New Trade, Economic, and Defence Partnerships with Indo-Pacific Nations,” November 1, 2025; Governo do Brasil, Presidência da República, “Discurso do Presidente Lula na Cúpula Virtual do BRICS,” September 8, 2025; and Gobierno de Colombia, “Comunicado Conjunto Ministerios de Comercio, Industria y Turismo y Relaciones Exteriores,” April 3, 2025.

Tariff Actions

The International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) and Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974

In 2025, President Trump invoked the International Emergency Economic Powers Act of 1977 (50 U.S.C. §§1701 et seq.) to impose various tariffs on nearly all U.S. trading partners. These included tariffs on Mexico and Canada tied to illicit fentanyl and border security concerns; tariffs on Brazil tied to alleged political persecution and freedom-of-expression concerns; and tariffs on most other Western Hemisphere countries tied to a purported lack of reciprocity in trade relations.¹⁸⁰ In February 2026, the U.S. Supreme Court held that IEEPA does not give the President authority to impose tariffs.¹⁸¹ President Trump subsequently lifted the IEEPA tariffs.¹⁸² Trump Administration officials have stated that they intend to pursue continuity in U.S. tariff policies and potential tariff hikes using other trade authorities.¹⁸³ Following the Supreme Court's ruling, President Trump imposed a 10% "temporary import surcharge" on most goods from all trading partners under Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. §2132).¹⁸⁴ This surcharge can be in place for a maximum of 150 days;¹⁸⁵ an extension of this tariff would require an act of Congress.¹⁸⁶ In May 2026, the Court of International Trade (CIT) held that President Trump's proclamation imposing a temporary import surcharge did not comply with the criteria for imposing an import surcharge under Section 122.¹⁸⁷ The government has appealed the CIT's ruling to the Federal Circuit.¹⁸⁸

Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974

Title III of the Trade Act of 1974 (§§301-310, 19 U.S.C. §§2411-2420) grants USTR the authority to investigate certain foreign trade practices and take action (e.g., impose a tariff) if the

¹⁸⁰ E.O. 14193 of February 1, 2025, "Imposing Duties to Address the Flow of Illicit Drugs Across Our Northern Border," 90 *Federal Register* 9113, February 7, 2025; E.O. 14194 of February 1, 2025, "Imposing Duties to Address the Situation at Our Southern Border," 90 *Federal Register* 9117, February 7, 2025; E.O. 14257 of April 2, 2025, "Regulating Imports with a Reciprocal Tariff to Rectify Trade Practices That Contribute to Large and Persistent Annual United States Goods Trade Deficits," 90 *Federal Register* 15041, April 7, 2025; and E.O. 14326 of July 31, 2025, "Further Modifying the Reciprocal Tariff Rates," 90 *Federal Register* 37963, August 6, 2025. For information on IEEPA, see CRS Report R45618, *The International Emergency Economic Powers Act: Origins, Evolution, and Use*, coordinated by Christopher A. Casey.

¹⁸¹ *Learning Resources, Inc. v. Trump*, No. 24-1287, slip op. at 20 (U.S. Feb. 20, 2026). CRS Legal Sidebar LSB11398, *Supreme Court Rules Against Tariffs Imposed Under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA)*, by Christopher T. Zirpoli.

¹⁸² Proclamation 11012 of February 20, 2026, "Imposing a Temporary Import Surcharge to Address Fundamental International Payments Problems," 91 *Federal Register* 9339, February 25, 2026.

¹⁸³ For example, see USTR, "Ambassador Greer Issues Statement on Supreme Court IEEPA Decision," February 20, 2026; and Margaret Spiegelman, "Kimmitt: More Section 232 probes likely," *Inside U.S. Trade*, February 23, 2026.

¹⁸⁴ Proclamation 11012.

¹⁸⁵ 19 U.S.C. §2132(a).

¹⁸⁶ 19 U.S.C. §2132(a).

¹⁸⁷ *State of Oregon v. United States and Burlap & Barrel, Inc. v. United States*, Slip Op. 26-47 (Ct. Int'l Trade May 7, 2026).

¹⁸⁸ *Burlap & Barrel, Inc. v. Trump*, No. 2026-1805, Notice of Docketing at 1 (Fed. Cir. May 8, 2026), ECF No. 1-1; *State of Oregon v. Trump*, No. 2026-1804, Notice of Docketing at 1 (Fed. Cir. May 8, 2026), ECF No. 1-1; *State of Oregon v. Trump*, Nos. 2026-1804, 2026-1805, Order at 3 (Fed. Cir. May 12, 2026) (per curiam) (granting immediate administrative stay pending consideration of motions for stay pending appeal).

investigation determines that the foreign trade practices meet certain conditions.¹⁸⁹ Trade with numerous Western Hemisphere countries may be impacted by ongoing or recently concluded Section 301 investigations. In December 2024, under the Biden Administration, USTR initiated an investigation into labor and human rights practices and the rule of law in Nicaragua.¹⁹⁰ In fall 2025, under the Trump Administration, USTR determined that Nicaragua’s practices were actionable under Section 301 and implemented a phased-in tariff on goods not originating under the Dominican Republic-Central America FTA (CAFTA-DR) beginning at 0% in 2026 and rising to 15% by 2028.¹⁹¹ In July 2025, USTR initiated an investigation into Brazil’s practices related to digital trade and electronic payment services, tariffs, anti-corruption enforcement, intellectual property protection, ethanol market access, and deforestation.¹⁹² USTR is expected to make a determination in this investigation in 2026.

The Trump Administration has indicated it will increase its use of Section 301 following the Supreme Court decision on IEEPA.¹⁹³ In March 2026, USTR announced two new investigations into dozens of countries, including countries in the Western Hemisphere, related to excess manufacturing capacity (Mexico) and forced labor (Argentina, the Bahamas, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela).¹⁹⁴ USTR is expected to conduct these new investigations on an accelerated schedule and make determinations in 2026.

Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962

Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 (19 U.S.C. §1862) authorizes the President to impose trade restrictions if the Secretary of Commerce determines that imports of a good “threaten to impair” U.S. national security.¹⁹⁵ President Trump has invoked Section 232 to impose tariffs on key sectors in some Western Hemisphere countries, including steel, aluminum, autos, copper, and timber and lumber.¹⁹⁶ Following a Section 232 investigation into processed critical minerals, in January 2026, President Trump directed his Administration to pursue negotiations or continue current negotiations of agreements with trading partners related to critical minerals and stated that he may consider “alternative remedies in the future, including minimum import prices for specific types of critical minerals” to address issues such as a lack of secure, reliable U.S.

¹⁸⁹ For more information, see CRS In Focus IF11346, *Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974*, by Danielle M. Trachtenberg.

¹⁹⁰ USTR, “Initiation of Section 301 Investigation, Hearing, and Request for Public Comments: Nicaragua’s Acts, Policies, and Practices Related to Labor Rights, Human Rights, and Rule of Law,” 89 *Federal Register* 101088, December 13, 2024.

¹⁹¹ USTR, “Notice of Implementation of Action: Nicaragua’s Acts, Policies, and Practices Related to Labor Rights, Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the Rule of Law,” 90 *Federal Register* 60850, December 29, 2025.

¹⁹² CRS Insight IN12613, *Section 301 Investigation into Brazil’s Acts, Policies, and Practices*, by Danielle M. Trachtenberg.

¹⁹³ USTR, “Ambassador Greer Issues Statement on Supreme Court IEEPA Decision.”

¹⁹⁴ USTR, “Initiation of Section 301 Investigations: Acts, Policies, and Practices of Certain Economies Relating to Structural Excess Capacity and Production in Manufacturing Sectors,” 91 *Federal Register* 12886, March 17, 2026; and “Initiation of Section 301 Investigations of Acts, Policies, and Practices of Various Economies Related to the Failure to Impose and Effectively Enforce a Prohibition on the Importation of Goods Produced with Forced Labor,” 91 *Federal Register* 12884, March 17, 2026.

¹⁹⁵ For more information, see CRS In Focus IF13006, *Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962*, by Kyla H. Kitamura.

¹⁹⁶ For more information, see CRS Insight IN12519, *Section 232 Tariffs on Steel and Aluminum*, by Kyla H. Kitamura; CRS Insight IN12545, *Section 232 Automotive Tariffs: Issues for Congress*, by Kyla H. Kitamura; CRS Insight IN12614, *Section 232 National Security Tariffs on Copper Imports*, by Kyla H. Kitamura; and CRS Report R48781, *U.S.-Canada Softwood Lumber Trade: Current Issues for Congress*, by Kyla H. Kitamura and Anne A. Riddle.

access to critical minerals due to “unsustainable price volatility” in global markets.¹⁹⁷ Some agreements with Western Hemisphere partners have included language on critical minerals (see “Executive Trade Agreements”).

Executive Trade Agreements

Following the imposition of U.S. tariffs during the second Trump Administration, USTR has conducted bilateral negotiations with various Western Hemisphere partners. USTR has signed bilateral trade deals, called *Agreements on Reciprocal Trade* (ART), with Argentina, Ecuador, El Salvador, and Guatemala.¹⁹⁸ The White House asserted that these deals allow for “greater and more streamlined market access in some of America’s most critical strategic partners in the Western Hemisphere,”¹⁹⁹ and that the ARTs with El Salvador and Guatemala “further [strengthen and build] upon our longstanding economic relationship,” including CAFTA-DR.²⁰⁰ The ARTs generally involve U.S. trading partner commitments on preferential market access, including reduced tariffs, digital trade, intellectual property rights protection, environmental standards, economic and national security cooperation, and labor rights and an import ban on products made with forced labor, among other provisions.²⁰¹ In exchange for trading partners’ commitments under the ARTs, the United States agreed to lower certain tariff rates from the higher rates imposed under IEEPA on those partners.

USTR has incorporated provisions to facilitate U.S. investment in critical minerals into some of the ARTs and has announced additional Western Hemisphere initiatives related specifically to critical minerals.²⁰² In February 2026, for example, USTR announced a U.S.-Mexico Action Plan on Critical Minerals.²⁰³ In response to President Trump’s direction to negotiate with trading partners on critical minerals (see “Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962”), in February 2026, USTR began seeking public comment on a potential “plurilateral agreement on trade in critical minerals and downstream products with like-minded partners that would create investment incentives for expanding supply chains for certain critical minerals.”²⁰⁴ Some Western Hemisphere trading partners may be targeted as potential participants.

¹⁹⁷ Proclamation 11001 of January 14, 2026, “Adjusting Imports of Processed Critical Minerals and Their Derivative Products into the United States,” 91 *Federal Register* 2439, January 20, 2026. For more context on U.S. policy related to minimum import prices (“price floors”), see, for example, Gracelin Baskaran and Meredith Schwartz, *Critical Minerals Ministerial Introduces New International Cooperation Strategy*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, February 13, 2026.

¹⁹⁸ USTR, “Ambassador Greer Signs the United States-Ecuador Agreement on Reciprocal Trade,” press release, March 13, 2026; USTR, “Ambassador Greer Signs the United States-Argentina Agreement on Reciprocal Trade and Investment,” press release, February 5, 2026; USTR, “Ambassador Greer Signs the United States-Guatemala Agreement on Reciprocal Trade,” January 30, 2026; and USTR, “Ambassador Greer Signs the U.S.-El Salvador Agreement on Reciprocal Trade,” press release, January 29, 2026.

¹⁹⁹ White House, “Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Announces Historic Trade Deals,” November 13, 2025.

²⁰⁰ White House, “Joint Statement on Framework for a United States-Guatemala Agreement on Reciprocal Trade and Investment,” November 13, 2025 and “Joint Statement on Framework for a United States-El Salvador Agreement on Reciprocal Trade and Investment,” November 13, 2025.

²⁰¹ For more details, see USTR, *The President’s 2026 Trade Policy Agenda and 2025 Annual Report*, pp. 45-57.

²⁰² United States of America-Argentine Republic Agreement on Reciprocal Trade and Investment, Article 5.1; Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Ecuador on Reciprocal Trade, Article 6.1; and Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of El Salvador on Reciprocal Trade, Article 6.2.

²⁰³ USTR, “Ambassador Jamieson Greer Announces U.S.-Mexico Action Plan on Critical Minerals,” press release, February 4, 2026.

²⁰⁴ USTR, “Request for Comments on the Design of a Plurilateral Agreement on Trade in Critical Minerals and Policy Actions to Strengthen the Resilience of Critical Mineral Supply Chains,” 91 *Federal Register* 9686, February 26, 2026.

USMCA Joint Review

U.S. trade relations with Canada and Mexico—two of the United States’ top trade partners—under USMCA are a key issue for the U.S. economy and Congress.²⁰⁵ The *President’s 2026 Trade Policy Agenda* highlighted the review of USMCA as a key priority, stating, “The Western Hemisphere is of unique importance to the economic and national security of the United States, and that begins with Mexico and Canada.”²⁰⁶ USMCA is scheduled to terminate in July 2036, unless all three USMCA parties confirm they wish to continue the agreement through a “joint review” process.²⁰⁷ The first joint review is scheduled for July 2026. In a December 2025 briefing to Congress, USTR Jamieson Greer stated that “USTR will keep the President’s options open” regarding USMCA renewal, “negotiating firmly to resolve the issues identified, but only recommending renewal if resolution can be achieved.”²⁰⁸ The Canadian and Mexican governments have stated that they prefer USMCA to remain in place as a trilateral agreement.²⁰⁹

U.S. Trade and Investment Financing and Other Support

The U.S. government offers financing, technical assistance, and other services to support U.S. goods and services exports and U.S. overseas private investments through agencies such as the Export-Import Bank of the United States (Ex-Im Bank) and the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC).²¹⁰ These agencies provide support in various sectors in the region, including energy, transportation, and digital communications. Their services are subject to statutory requirements regarding, for example, country eligibility, “additionality” to private sector services, risk management, and environmental and social impact. In FY2025, the Latin American and Caribbean region accounted for 10.0% (\$3.5 billion) of Ex-Im Bank’s total exposure (\$34.8 billion).²¹¹ For DFC, the Western Hemisphere region accounted for 27.2% (\$11.8 billion) of the agency’s total exposure in FY2025, the largest share by region for DFC.²¹²

Under the second Trump Administration, one priority for these agencies has been strengthening critical minerals supply chains. In that vein, in February 2026, Ex-Im Bank announced it had approved up to \$10 billion in financing for Project Vault, an initiative to establish a critical minerals reserve in the United States to support domestic manufacturers and producers and reduce dependency on China for critical minerals.²¹³ Cast as a “public-private partnership,”

²⁰⁵ For more on USMCA and U.S. trade relations with Canada and Mexico, see CRS In Focus IF10997, *U.S.-Mexico-Canada (USMCA) Trade Agreement*, by M. Angeles Villarreal, Kyla H. Kitamura, and Danielle M. Trachtenberg; CRS In Focus IF12595, *U.S.-Canada Trade Relations*, by Kyla H. Kitamura; and CRS Report R48859, *Mexico: Background and Key Issues in U.S. Relations*, by Clare Ribando Seelke and Danielle M. Trachtenberg.

²⁰⁶ USTR, *The President’s 2026 Trade Policy Agenda*, p. 7.

²⁰⁷ USMCA, art. 34.7. For more details, see CRS Report R48787, *USMCA Joint Review: Process and Role of Congress*, by Kyla H. Kitamura and Danielle M. Trachtenberg.

²⁰⁸ Remarks by USTR Jamieson Greer, “Opening Statement for House Ways and Means and Senate Finance Committees,” December 16 and 17, 2025.

²⁰⁹ See, for example, Robert Fife, “Canada, Mexico to Kick Off Bilateral Talks About USMCA in May; The U.S. Is Scheduled to Speak with Mexico Next Week, No Date Has Been Set for U.S., Canada Discussions Yet,” *Globe and Mail*, March 9, 2026.

²¹⁰ For general background, see CRS In Focus IF10017, *Export-Import Bank: Overview and Reauthorization Debate*, by Shayerah I. Akhtar; and CRS In Focus IF11436, *U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC)*, by Shayerah I. Akhtar and Nick M. Brown.

²¹¹ Export-Import Bank of the United States (Ex-Im Bank), *FY2025 Annual Management Report*, p. 19.

²¹² U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), *FY2025 Annual Management Report*, p. 6.

²¹³ Ex-Im Bank, “EXIM Approves Project Vault Loan to Launch America’s Strategic Critical Minerals Reserve and (continued...)”

Project Vault is expected to involve participation from original equipment manufacturers and critical minerals suppliers. Mineral-rich countries such as Argentina and Brazil could be focal points for Project Vault. Separately, Brazil already has been a part of DFC's critical-minerals-related activity. In 2020 and 2022, DFC committed a total of \$55 million to support investments in cobalt and nickel mining in Brazil. In February 2026, DFC announced that it signed a financing agreement for a \$565 million loan to expand a rare earths mine in Brazil.²¹⁴

Ex-Im Bank and DFC also could be among the agencies that participate in the Forum on Resource Geostrategic Engagement (FORGE), announced in February 2026 by the Trump Administration as the successor to the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP).²¹⁵ Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru were among the members of the MSP Forum, a part of the MSP framework which aimed to support specific critical minerals projects and address policy issues regarding secure, sustainable critical minerals supplies.²¹⁶

Ex-Im Bank has emerged in discussions about potential financing for investments by U.S. energy companies in Venezuela following the January 2026 U.S. military removal of then-Venezuelan President Maduro.²¹⁷ For instance, in a news interview, U.S. Secretary of Energy Chris Wright stated that Ex-Im Bank may be used as "credit support for large projects" in Venezuela.²¹⁸ As of February 3, 2026, Ex-Im Bank financing was not available in Venezuela.²¹⁹ Availability of the agency's financing depends on its assessment of country risk and application of other requirements, including ensuring compliance with U.S. sanctions.²²⁰

U.S. Trade Flows with Western Hemisphere Countries

Amid the second Trump Administration's shifts in U.S. trade policy, overall U.S. goods trade with the Western Hemisphere remained relatively stable. In 2025, the United States' total goods trade (exports plus imports) with the region amounted to approximately \$1.96 trillion. Compared with 2024, U.S. goods exports to the Western Hemisphere decreased by \$5.7 billion (0.6%) to \$877 billion and U.S. goods imports from the region increased by \$4.5 billion (0.4%) to nearly \$1.1 trillion. As a result, the U.S. goods trade deficit with the Western Hemisphere increased by \$10.1 billion (5%) from 2024 to 2025 (see **Figure 5**).²²¹ The Western Hemisphere accounted for about 35% of U.S. goods trade with the world in 2025, and Mexico and Canada accounted for 81% of the Western Hemisphere's goods trade with the United States. The region's trade flows with China also were relatively stable in 2025, though growth in PRC exports to the Western

Support Manufacturing Jobs," February 2, 2026; and U.S. Department of State, "2026 Critical Minerals Ministerial," February 4, 2026

²¹⁴ DFC, "DFC Highlights Landmark Critical Minerals Investments to Strengthen U.S. National Security During State Department Ministerial," February 4, 2026; DFC, "Active Projects," <https://www.dfc.gov/what-we-do/active-projects>.

²¹⁵ U.S. Department of State, "2026 Critical Minerals Ministerial," February 4, 2026.

²¹⁶ U.S. Department of State, "Joint Statement on the High-Level Minerals Security Partnership Forum in New York City," September 27, 2024.

²¹⁷ CRS In Focus IF12448, *Venezuela's Natural Gas: Opportunity Knocks?*, by Michael Ratner and Clare Ribando Seelke; and CRS Insight IN12637, *Venezuela Oil Sector: Context for Recent Developments*, by Brent D. Yacobucci.

²¹⁸ U.S. Department of Energy, Facebook post and video of interview of Secretary Wright with Fox News, January 9, 2026, <https://www.facebook.com/energy/videos/secretary-chris-wright-i-have-been-deluged-with-companies-interested-to-go-to-ve/1143971557811131/>.

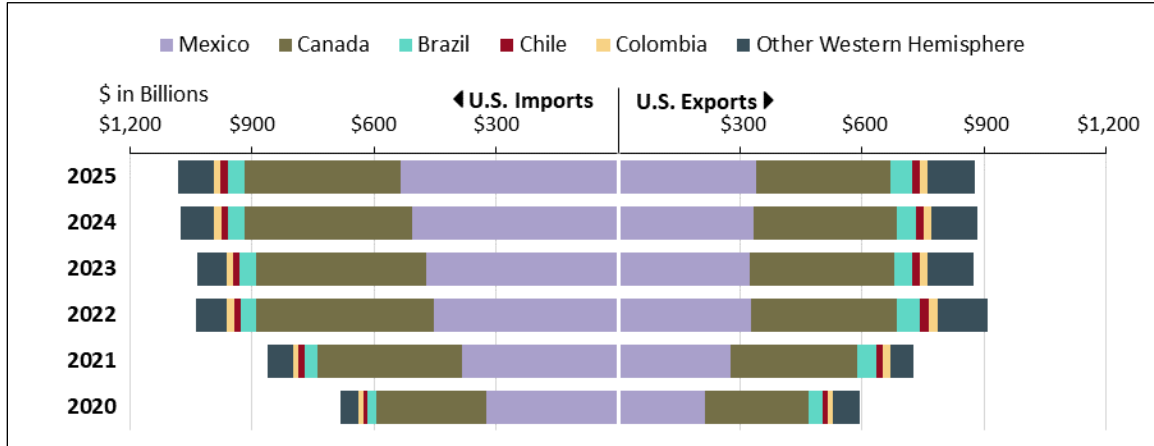
²¹⁹ See Ex-Im Bank, "Country Limitation Schedule," <https://www.exim.gov/resources/country-limitation-schedule#tblV>; and Doug Palmer, "U.S. Ex-Im Bank Loans for Venezuela Would Face Creditworthiness Hurdle," *PoliticoPro*, January 6, 2026.

²²⁰ Ex-Im Bank, *FY2025 Annual Management Report*, p. 14.

²²¹ Data in this paragraph are from U.S. Census Bureau, as reported by Trade Data Monitor, accessed on April 7, 2026.

Hemisphere continued to outpace the growth in PRC imports from the region (see **text box**, “China-Western Hemisphere Trade Flows,” below).

Figure 5. U.S. Goods Trade with the Western Hemisphere, 2020-2025



Source: Created by CRS using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, as reported by Trade Data Monitor, accessed on April 6, 2026.

Notes: Countries listed are the top five U.S. trade partners in the Western Hemisphere. “Other Western Hemisphere” includes the other 29 independent countries of the region.

Although trade with the overall region remained relatively stable in 2025, U.S. goods trade with some countries experienced significant changes. For example, in 2025, U.S. imports from Canada declined by \$28.9 billion (7%) and U.S. exports to Canada declined by \$20.1 billion (6%) compared with 2024. Conversely, U.S. goods trade with Mexico rose in 2025, with U.S. imports increasing by \$29.3 billion (6%) and U.S. exports increasing by \$3.9 billion (1%) compared with 2024. U.S. goods trade with Brazil—the United States’ third-largest trading partner in the Western Hemisphere—was mixed in 2025, with U.S. imports declining by \$2.4 billion (6%) and U.S. exports increasing by \$5.2 billion (11%) in 2025 compared with 2024.²²²

China-Western Hemisphere Trade Flows

The People’s Republic of China (PRC, or China) is the second-largest trading partner of the non-U.S. Western Hemisphere, behind the United States. In 2025, China’s total goods trade (exports plus imports) with the region amounted to approximately \$636 billion, comprising about 13% of China’s total goods trade with the world. Compared with 2024, PRC goods imports from the Western Hemisphere (excluding the United States) increased by about \$5 billion (2%) to \$292 billion and PRC goods exports to the region increased by about \$22 billion (7%) to \$344 billion in 2025. Brazil was the PRC’s largest trading partner in the region, with total goods trade amounting to \$188 billion.

Western Hemisphere countries’ primary exports to China consist largely of commodities, including various ores and minerals (e.g., copper, lithium), soybeans and other vegetables, animal products, and petroleum. These countries mainly import manufactured products from China, reflecting the general trade pattern China maintains with the rest of the world. China is the largest trading partner of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Peru and has signed free-trade agreements with Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Peru. Mineral exports are among the top exports to China for most of these economies.

Sources: PRC General Administration of Customs data, as reported by Trade Data Monitor, accessed March 23, 2026; Ministry of Commerce of the PRC, “China’s Free Trade Agreements,” updated May 20, 2025; and Rebecca Ray et al., *China-Latin America and the Caribbean Economic Bulletin, 2024 Edition*, Boston University Global Development Policy Center, July 2024.

²²² Data in this paragraph are from U.S. Census Bureau, as reported by Trade Data Monitor, accessed on April 7, 2026.

Legislative Action and Issues for Congressional Consideration

President Trump has imposed tariffs on most trading partners, including in the Western Hemisphere, utilizing several authorities delegated by Congress. Congress may consider whether to curb, bolster, or modify these delegated authorities. Another issue for Congress is whether U.S. tariff policy is consistent with congressional intent related to U.S. trade agreement obligations and broader U.S. relations with foreign partners in the Western Hemisphere.²²³ During the 119th Congress, the Senate and the House separately passed joint resolutions that would terminate the underlying national emergency previously used to invoke IEEPA to declare duties on Canada (S.J.Res. 37, S.J.Res. 77, H.J.Res. 72). Similar resolutions have been proposed to terminate other emergencies previously used to impose tariffs (see **Table A-2**).

Congress also may contemplate oversight of U.S. trade policy in the Western Hemisphere, including assessing potential effects of trade actions on the U.S. economy. In particular, Congress has oversight of USMCA implementation and the scheduled 2026 review. There is no TPA in place ahead of the forthcoming USMCA joint review. The USMCA Implementation Act (P.L. 116-113) specifies how the President and USTR must engage with Congress in the joint review process, including consultation requirements.²²⁴ In December 2025, USTR reported to the House Ways and Means and Senate Finance Committees on the operation of USMCA in advance of the July 2026 review, as required by P.L. 116-113.²²⁵ In its report on the USMCA Implementation Act, the House Ways and Means Committee stated it “intends to be heavily engaged in any decisions with respect to sunset and expects consultation to be timely and robust.”²²⁶ The Senate Finance Committee noted that the joint review provision “does not change the constitutional structure of the United States with respect to the conduct of trade policy” and that “the United States cannot withdraw from a congressionally approved trade agreement without the consent of Congress.”²²⁷

Congress also could consider whether and to what extent to engage with bilateral trade negotiations currently led by the executive branch. As discussed above, Congress has constitutional authority over foreign commerce and tariffs and in the past has played a role in approving and implementing trade agreements. Some Members have asserted that the executive branch should engage in more substantive consultations with Congress on trade-related initiatives and seek congressional approval for sectoral agreements, such as those related to critical minerals.²²⁸ In the 119th Congress, bills have been introduced that would authorize the executive branch to negotiate sectoral FTAs focusing on critical minerals and rare earth elements and that outline the consultation and approval processes for such agreements (e.g., S. 429).

The 119th Congress also may debate whether to reauthorize, and/or potentially modify, expired or expiring trade preference programs, such as GSP and preferences for Haiti. The Further

²²³ See CRS In Focus IF12995, *International Trade Agreements and U.S. Tariff Laws*, by Christopher T. Zirpoli, Christopher A. Casey, and Cathleen D. Cimino-Isaacs.

²²⁴ CRS Report R48787, *USMCA Joint Review: Process and Role of Congress*, by Kyla H. Kitamura and Danielle M. Trachtenberg.

²²⁵ P.L. 116-113 §611(b)(2).

²²⁶ U.S. Congress, House Committee on Ways and Means, *United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement Implementation Act*, report to accompany H.R. 5430, 116th Cong., 1st sess., H.Rept. 116-358, part 1, December 19, 2019, p. 35.

²²⁷ U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Finance, *United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement Implementation Act*, report to accompany H.R. 5430, 116th Cong., 2nd sess., S.Rept. 116-283, October 21, 2020, p. 18. Also see CRS Report R47679, *Congressional and Executive Authority Over Foreign Trade Agreements*, by Christopher T. Zirpoli.

²²⁸ See “Issues for Congress” in CRS Report R48676, *U.S.-Japan Critical Minerals Agreement: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Kyla H. Kitamura.

Continuing Appropriations Act, 2026 (P.L. 119-75, Division H, §5021), extended preferences for Haiti through December 2026. In addition, Congress may consider whether to direct the Administration to pursue bilateral trade agreement negotiations addressing reciprocal market access issues with countries currently receiving unilateral trade preferences in the Western Hemisphere.

Congress also could examine the role of Ex-Im Bank and DFC in supporting U.S. exports to and investments in the Western Hemisphere, through both general programs and specific initiatives, such as to bolster critical minerals supply chains, and the competitiveness of these agencies' services vis-à-vis those offered by foreign governments to U.S. business competitors in the region. Potential reauthorization of Ex-Im Bank, the charter of which expires at the end of 2026 without congressional action, could be an avenue for consideration of some of these issues.²²⁹

Political Engagement

U.S. political engagement in the Western Hemisphere, including support for democracy and human rights, has varied across U.S. Administrations and Congresses. During the Cold War, the U.S. government regularly sought to support or undermine particular leaders, political parties, and candidates in Latin America and the Caribbean based on their perceived geopolitical alignment.²³⁰ At times, concerns about U.S. actions in the hemisphere, as well as about human rights abuses committed by some of those receiving U.S. support, prompted Congress to exert greater influence over U.S. engagement. During the 1970s, for example, Congress enacted a series of legislative initiatives to incorporate the promotion and protection of human rights into U.S. foreign policy. In addition to various global provisions, these measures included restrictions on U.S. military assistance for specific authoritarian governments in the Western Hemisphere, including, at various times during the 1970s, those in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Uruguay.²³¹

Since the late 1980s, successive U.S. Administrations and Congresses generally have sought to support the consolidation of democratic governance and adherence to human rights standards in the Western Hemisphere, with varying degrees of prioritization. According to U.S. law, the promotion of democracy and human rights are “principal” and “fundamental” goals of U.S. foreign policy, in general, as well as objectives of U.S. policy in the Western Hemisphere.²³² Among other actions, U.S. democracy promotion efforts have included diplomatic engagement to promote free and fair elections and the provision of foreign assistance to improve governance, increase transparency, protect human rights, and strengthen civil society and independent media.²³³ The U.S. government also has imposed various sanctions in the region, including travel restrictions or economic sanctions on foreign individuals or entities determined to be involved in

²²⁹ Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as amended, 12 U.S.C. §§635 *et seq.*

²³⁰ For a case study of such actions, see U.S. Congress, Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, *Covert Action in Chile 1963-1973*, committee print, 94th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington: GPO, 1975).

²³¹ See, for example, U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Human Rights and U.S. Foreign Assistance: Experiences and Issues in Policy Implementation (1977-1978)*, committee print, prepared by Congressional Research Service, 96th Cong., 1st sess., November 1979, 51-320 (Washington: GPO, 1979).

²³² Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, Section 502B(a)(1) (22 U.S.C. §2304(a)(1)); Advance Democratic Values, Address Nondemocratic Countries, and Enhance [ADVANCE] Democracy Act of 2007, Section 2103 (22 U.S.C. §8202); Western Hemisphere Partnership Act, Section 5112 (22 U.S.C. §2151 note).

²³³ For information on U.S. democracy promotion globally, see CRS Report R47890, *Democracy and Human Rights in U.S. Foreign Policy: Evolution, Tools, and Considerations for Congress*, by Michael A. Weber.

corruption, human rights abuses, or undemocratic acts. In addition to those targeted sanctions, the U.S. government has imposed broader sectoral sanctions against some authoritarian regimes.²³⁴

The U.S. shift to democracy promotion coincided with an expansion of electoral democracy and increased respect for human rights in the Western Hemisphere. As of 2025, the nongovernmental democracy advocacy and research organization Freedom House classified 23 Western Hemisphere countries as *free* and eight countries (the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, and Peru) as *partly free*, based on the extent to which individuals are able to exercise their political rights and civil liberties. Freedom House classified four Western Hemisphere countries as *not free*—Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, which are governed by authoritarian regimes, and Haiti, which has lacked an elected government since a 2021 presidential assassination.²³⁵

Second Trump Administration Approach and Regional Response

The second Trump Administration’s approach to political engagement in the Western Hemisphere appears to shift away from promoting democratic values in favor of advancing more narrowly ideological and transactional relationships. The 2025 NSS asserts that the United States seeks “good relations and peaceful commercial relations with the nations of the world without imposing on them democratic or other social change that differs widely from their traditions and histories.”²³⁶ With regard to the Western Hemisphere, the NSS asserts that the United States “will reward and encourage the region’s governments, political parties, and movements broadly aligned with our principles and strategy” without overlooking “governments with different outlooks” that share common interests and seek cooperation.²³⁷ The State Department’s *Agency Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2026–2030* does not identify democracy promotion as an objective for U.S. policy in Western Hemisphere or for general U.S. foreign assistance policy.

Democracy Assistance and Election Policy Shifts

As part of the Administration’s foreign assistance policy changes, discussed previously, it terminated democracy assistance projects and sought to downsize or eliminate some of the U.S. agencies that have promoted democracy and human rights in the Western Hemisphere, including USAID; the State Department’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor; and the Inter-American Foundation.²³⁸ The Administration has not publicly released information regarding the specific awards and contracts affected, but press reports suggest that nearly all democracy assistance programs in the region were terminated, with the exception of a few programs in Venezuela and Cuba.²³⁹ The President’s FY2027 budget request does not appear to include any funding for democracy assistance in the Western Hemisphere.

²³⁴ For examples of U.S. sanctions, see CRS In Focus IF12486, *Central America: Policy Options Following Expiration of Targeted Sanctions Authority*, by Peter J. Meyer; and CRS In Focus IF10715, *Venezuela: Overview of U.S. Sanctions Policy*, by Clare Ribando Seelke.

²³⁵ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2026: The Growing Shadow of Autocracy*, March 2026, p. 27.

²³⁶ White House, *National Security Strategy*, p. 9.

²³⁷ White House, *National Security Strategy*, p. 16.

²³⁸ USAID, “Notification of Administrative Leave,” February 23, 2025; Eric Katz and David Dimolfetta, “Here’s Where the State Department Is Planning Its Layoffs and Changes,” *Government Executive*, May 29, 2025; and E.O. 14127 of February 19, 2025, “Commencing the Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy,” 90 *Federal Register* 10577, February 25, 2025.

²³⁹ See, for example, Nora Gámez Torres, “Trump Administration Reinstates Some Cuba Democracy Programs, But (continued...)”

The Administration has asserted that democracy assistance efforts, in general, “interfere with the sovereignty of other countries,” have been used by activists to promote “radical causes,” sometimes interfere with other U.S. geopolitical objectives, and have not always proven effective.²⁴⁰ Some government officials in countries classified by Freedom House as *partly free* have celebrated the termination of U.S. democracy assistance programs, which they assert were destabilizing, and have cited statements by Trump Administration officials alleging fraud at USAID to justify investigations of former U.S. partner organizations.²⁴¹

In July 2025, the State Department reportedly adopted a new policy of avoiding “opining on the fairness or integrity of an electoral process, its legitimacy, or the democratic values” of countries unless “there is a clear and compelling U.S. foreign policy interest to do so.”²⁴² Within the Western Hemisphere, the Trump Administration has continued to comment on many—but not all—elections. Between September and December 2025, for example, the State Department commended electoral processes in Bolivia, Guyana, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.²⁴³ The State Department expressed concerns about potential threats to free and fair elections in Honduras in November 2025 and imposed visa restrictions on some Honduran officials for allegedly “undermining democracy in Honduras by impeding the vote count.”²⁴⁴ In addition to these statements and actions related to electoral processes, the Administration has sought to influence some elections in the Western Hemisphere, as discussed below.

Support for Ideological Allies

In a shift from the general U.S. government approach to elections in the Western Hemisphere over the previous 30 years, the second Trump Administration occasionally has weighed in on behalf of particular political parties and candidates. In the lead-up to October 2025 legislative elections in Argentina, for example, U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent announced U.S. financial support for Argentina, including a \$20 billion currency swap line financed through the

Turns Off Radio Martí,” *Miami Herald*, March 19, 2025; Elissa Miolene, “How the U.S. Government Let Support for Democracy Unravel,” *Devex*, May 22, 2025; and Andrew Roth, “U.S. State Department Told to End Nearly All Its Overseas Pro-Democracy Programs,” *Guardian*, June 26, 2025.

²⁴⁰ White House, “Proposed Recissions of Budgetary Resources,” May 28, 2025; Marco Rubio, Secretary of State, “A New State Department to Meet the Challenges of a New Era,” U.S. Department of State, April 22, 2025; and U.S. Congress, House Appropriations Committee, National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs Subcommittee, *Budget Hearing—Department of State and Related Programs*, testimony of Secretary of State Rubio, 119th Cong., 1st sess., May 21, 2025.

²⁴¹ See, for example, President of El Salvador Nayib Bukele (@nayibbukele), X post, February 2, 2025, <https://x.com/nayibbukele/status/1886059275174506850>; and Luis Redondo, then-President of the Congress of Honduras, as quoted in “La Sociedad Civil y ONGs Incomodan y Luis Redondo las Pone en Mira del Poder,” *Proceso Digital*, April 25, 2025.

²⁴² Robbie Gramer and Alexander Ward, “U.S. to Curtail Practice of Assessing Fairness of Foreign Elections,” *Wall Street Journal*, July 17, 2025.

²⁴³ U.S. Department of State, “Joint Statement on Bolivia Election,” October 21, 2025; U.S. Department of State, “Guyana’s National and Regional Elections,” September 7, 2025; U.S. Embassy to Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, “United States Congratulates Saint Lucia on Successful Elections,” December 2, 2025; and U.S. Embassy to Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, “United States Congratulates Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on Successful Elections,” November 28, 2025.

²⁴⁴ Christopher Landau, Deputy Secretary of State, “Remarks at the Organization of American States Permanent Council Special Meeting on Elections in Honduras,” U.S. Department of State, November 25, 2025; and Marco Rubio, Secretary of State, “Visa Restrictions on Honduran Government Officials Interfering with the 2025 Election Vote Count,” U.S. Department of State, December 19, 2025.

Treasury Department's Exchange Stabilization Fund, to help stabilize Argentina's currency.²⁴⁵ President Trump appeared to condition the U.S. financial support on a positive electoral outcome for President Milei's right-wing Liberty Advances coalition.²⁴⁶ The coalition outperformed some pollsters' expectations, resulting in a stronger bloc of support for Milei in the Argentine congress. Similarly, in November 2025, President Trump endorsed right-wing Honduran presidential candidate Nasry "Tito" Asfura and appeared to condition future U.S. foreign assistance to the country on Asfura's victory.²⁴⁷ Hondurans ultimately elected Asfura, who was inaugurated to a four-year presidential term in January 2026.

Other Trump Administration efforts to support ideological allies in the Western Hemisphere do not appear to have achieved their aims. In July 2025, President Trump announced his intention to increase tariffs on imports from Brazil and the U.S. Departments of State and the Treasury imposed sanctions on some Brazilian supreme court justices.²⁴⁸ The U.S. actions were partly in response to what the Trump Administration characterized as the political persecution of former right-wing Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro (2018–2022), who was on trial for an attempted coup to overturn his 2022 electoral defeat. Although some Bolsonaro allies welcomed the U.S. support, the left-of-center government of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003–2010; 2023–present) and the right-of-center leadership of Brazil's congress rejected the U.S. policies as unjustified interventions in Brazilian affairs.²⁴⁹ Despite the U.S. pressure, Brazil's supreme court convicted Bolsonaro and sentenced him to 27 years in prison in September 2025.²⁵⁰ The Trump Administration lifted asset-blocking sanctions on the justice who oversaw Bolsonaro's trial in December 2025 and lifted the additional tariffs on Brazil in February 2026, following a U.S. Supreme Court ruling.²⁵¹

Pressure on Authoritarian Governments

In its engagement with the region's authoritarian governments, the second Trump Administration has increased U.S. pressure and continued to highlight democracy and human rights concerns while sometimes prioritizing other U.S. objectives. As noted above (see "Terrorist Designations and Use of Military Force Against Criminal Groups"), in January 2026, the U.S. military captured

²⁴⁵ For more information, see CRS Report R48780, *U.S. Financial Support to Argentina*, by Joshua Klein and Rebecca M. Nelson.

²⁴⁶ President Donald J. Trump, "Remarks Prior to a Working Lunch with President Javier Milei of Argentina and an Exchange with Reporters," The American Presidency Project, October 14, 2025, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/378924>.

²⁴⁷ President Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Truth Social post, November 28, 2025, <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/115629406693931908>.

²⁴⁸ E.O. 14323 of July 30, 2025, "Addressing Threats to the United States by the Government of Brazil," 90 *Federal Register* 37739, August 5, 2025; Secretary of State Marco Rubio, "Announcement of Visa Restrictions on Brazilian Judicial Officials and Their Immediate Family Members," U.S. Department of State, July 18, 2025; and U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Treasury Sanctions Alexandre de Moraes," July 30, 2025.

²⁴⁹ *Folha de São Paulo*, "'Sensação de Missão Cumprida', Diz Eduardo Bolsonaro após Sanção de Trump a Moraes," July 30, 2025; Governo do Brasil, Presidência da República, "O Brasil é um País Soberano e Democrático," July 30, 2025; Brazilian Chamber of Deputies President Hugo Motta (@HugoMottaPB), X post, July 30, 2025, <https://x.com/HugoMottaPB/status/1950673741031350708>; and Brazilian Senate President Davi Alcolumbre (@davalcolumbre), X post, July 30, 2025, <https://x.com/davalcolumbre/status/1950752011009343985>.

²⁵⁰ Bolsonaro began serving his sentence in November 2025 and was granted temporary house arrest for 90 days due to poor health in March 2026. Supremo Tribunal Federal, "STF Fixa Penas de 16 a 27 Anos para Condenados por Tentativa de Golpe de Estado," September 11, 2025.

²⁵¹ U.S. Department of the Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control, "Notice of OFAC Sanctions Actions," 90 *Federal Register* 59942, December 22, 2025; E.O. 14389 of February 20, 2026, "Ending Certain Tariff Actions," 91 *Federal Register* 9437, February 25, 2026.

then-Venezuelan leader Maduro and transferred him to the United States to face narco-terrorism, drug trafficking, and weapons charges. Much of Maduro's government remains in place under the leadership of his former Vice President and Oil Minister Delcy Rodríguez, who has made some personnel changes in an apparent effort to consolidate her control.²⁵² To date, U.S. engagement with Rodríguez has focused primarily on stabilizing Venezuela's economic situation, including by facilitating the sale of Venezuelan oil and the modernization of Venezuela's energy sector. Secretary of State Rubio has stated that there ultimately should be elections in Venezuela but has refrained from offering a timeline for a democratic transition.²⁵³

Maduro's removal also has supported the Trump Administration's efforts to increase pressure on Cuba's authoritarian regime. Since January 2025, the Administration has implemented several policies that have targeted the Cuban government's economic lifelines, such as imposing visa restrictions on Cuban and foreign officials involved in Cuba's labor export program and issuing directives for executive agency heads to "adjust current regulations regarding transactions with Cuba," including tightening travel and remittance restrictions.²⁵⁴ Following Maduro's capture, the Administration blocked Venezuelan oil shipments to Cuba and issued an executive order subjecting governments that facilitate oil shipments to Cuba to potential tariffs.²⁵⁵ In May 2026, President Trump issued another executive order authorizing the U.S. Secretaries of State and Treasury to impose asset-blocking sanctions on any foreign person that has operated in certain sectors of the Cuban economy, which increases sanctions risks for third-country firms operating in Cuba.²⁵⁶ The President also has suggested that he may deploy military force against the Cuban government.²⁵⁷

Contending with a severe economic and energy crisis, individuals tied to the Cuban regime reportedly have engaged in discussions with the State Department regarding potential changes.²⁵⁸ According to some press reports, the Administration may be seeking to gradually open the Cuban economy to U.S. businesses and investors and remove Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel while largely leaving Cuba's authoritarian political system in place.²⁵⁹ Secretary Rubio has asserted that Cuba needs to make "dramatic reforms that open the space for both economic and eventually political freedom for the people of Cuba."²⁶⁰

²⁵² See, for example, Kejal Vyas and Ryan Dubé, "Venezuelan Leader Ditches Defense Minister for Another Hard-Liner," *Wall Street Journal*, March 18, 2026.

²⁵³ Testimony of Secretary of State Marco Rubio in U.S. Congress, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *U.S. Policy Towards Venezuela*, 119th Cong., 2nd sess., January 28, 2026; and Marco Rubio, Secretary of State, "Secretary of State Marco Rubio Remarks to Press," U.S. Department of State, February 25, 2026.

²⁵⁴ Marco Rubio, Secretary of State, "Visa Restrictions on African, Cuban, and Grenadian Government Officials Involved in the Cuban Regime's Coercive Forced Labor Export Scheme," August 13, 2025; and Memorandum of June 30, 2025, "Reissuance of and Amendments to National Security Presidential Memorandum 5 on Strengthening the Policy of the United States Toward Cuba," 90 *Federal Register* 38913, August 12, 2025.

²⁵⁵ E.O. 14380 of January 29, 2026, "Addressing Threats to the United States by the Government of Cuba," 91 *Federal Register*, 5085, February 3, 2026. For additional information, see CRS Insight IN12650, *U.S. Policy Toward Cuba: Recent Developments and Congressional Considerations*, by Joshua Klein.

²⁵⁶ White House, "Imposing Sanctions on Those Responsible for Repression in Cuba and for Threats to United States National Security and Foreign Policy," May 1, 2026.

²⁵⁷ See, for example, Reuters, "Trump: Want to Finish Iran Then Cuba 'Question of Time,'" March 5, 2026.

²⁵⁸ Jacqueline Charles and Nora Gámez Torres, "Secret Cuba Talks: Rubio Team Meets Castro's Grandson," *Miami Herald*, February 26, 2026.

²⁵⁹ See, for example, Frances Robles et al., "Trump Administration Said to Tell Cuba That Its President Has to Go," *New York Times*, March 16, 2026.

²⁶⁰ Marco Rubio, Secretary of State, "Secretary of State Marco Rubio Remarks to Press," U.S. Department of State, February 25, 2026.

To date, the authoritarian government of Nicaragua led by Daniel Ortega (1985-1990; 2007-present) and his wife and copresident Rosario Murillo has not faced the same level of pressure from the Trump Administration as the governments of Venezuela and Cuba, though it has been subject to U.S. sanctions and other measures. In April 2025, for example, the State Department imposed visa restrictions on more than 250 Nicaraguan officials, raising the total number of Nicaraguan officials subject to U.S. visa restrictions above 2,000.²⁶¹ Likewise, in February 2026, the Treasury Department imposed asset-blocking sanctions on five Nicaraguan officials “who lead the principal financial, communications, and military agencies” that enable repression in Nicaragua.²⁶² In April 2026, the Treasury Department imposed asset-blocking sanctions on five individuals and seven companies that operate in Nicaragua’s gold sector, which “help the Murillo-Ortega Dictatorship generate money and maintain political control.”²⁶³ In addition to such sanctions, USTR is imposing an additional tariff on certain imports from Nicaragua due to the country’s acts, policies, and practices related to labor rights, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, as noted above (see “Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974”).²⁶⁴

Legislative Action and Issues for Congressional Consideration

The 119th Congress has continued to express support for democracy promotion efforts, identifying programs that “advance democracy, constitutional order, and human rights” among the priorities for U.S. foreign assistance in the Western Hemisphere.²⁶⁵ The FY2026 NSRP appropriations legislation, for example, included \$2.175 billion in foreign assistance for democracy programs worldwide, including \$15 million for human rights in Colombia, \$25 million for democracy programs in Cuba, \$15 million for democracy and religious freedom programs in Nicaragua, \$50 million for democracy programs in Venezuela, and \$61.5 million to combat corruption and impunity in Central America.²⁶⁶ The legislation also required the State Department to report on, and tied some U.S. assistance to, democracy and human rights conditions in certain Western Hemisphere countries.

As Congress evaluates potential State Department authorization and NSRP appropriations for FY2027, it may consider whether and how the United States should continue to promote democracy in the Western Hemisphere. For example, Congress could consider the extent to which U.S. democracy promotion activities should concentrate on countries governed by authoritarian regimes versus countries assessed to be *partly free* or *free*. Congress also could consider the relative prioritization of democracy promotion in relation to other U.S. policy objectives. Such assessments could inform decisions regarding the types of activities to authorize and the funding levels to appropriate for particular countries.

Congress also could consider when, if at all, it may be appropriate for the U.S. government to offer support to particular political parties, candidates, or leaders in the democratic countries of

²⁶¹ Marco Rubio, Secretary of State, “Promoting Accountability for the Ortega-Murillo Dictatorship,” U.S. Department of State, April 18, 2025.

²⁶² U.S. Department of the Treasury, “Treasury Sanctions Nicaraguan Officials Enabling the Murillo-Ortega Dictatorship’s Repression,” February 26, 2026.

²⁶³ U.S. Department of the Treasury, “Treasury Sanctions Government Officials, Nicaraguan Regime-Linked Gold Firms, and Individuals Involved in Seizing U.S.-Owned Property,” April 16, 2026.

²⁶⁴ USTR, “Notice of Implementation Action: Nicaragua’s Acts, Policies, and Practices Related to Labor Rights, Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the Rule of Law,” 90 *Federal Register* 60850, December 29, 2025.

²⁶⁵ P.L. 119-75, § 7045(a); and Explanatory Statement Submitted by Mr. Cole, p. H867.

²⁶⁶ P.L. 119-75, §§ 7032(a), 7045(d), 7045(i), and 7045(l); and Explanatory Statement Submitted by Mr. Cole, pp. H860 and H867.

the Western Hemisphere. Among other considerations, Congress could assess how endorsements from the current Administration for particular parties or candidates might affect relations with countries in the region. It also could compare the Trump Administration's approach to that of the PRC, which is seeking to build long-term influence by cultivating relationships with leaders across the political spectrum.²⁶⁷ Among other actions, Congress could voice its position on U.S. engagement in the internal politics of other Western Hemisphere countries through Sense of the Congress resolutions or authorize or restrict the use of funds for particular types of political engagement.

Additionally, Congress could seek to influence how the U.S. government interacts with governments potentially transitioning away from authoritarianism. It could assess whether to authorize certain activities or impose restrictions on the use of U.S. funds prior to the establishment of a democratic government. Congress also could consider whether to authorize new sanctions authorities or provide mechanisms for sanctions relief to encourage democratic transitions. For example, Title II of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-114, 22 U.S.C. §§6061-6067) limits U.S. support to a potential transition government in Cuba to humanitarian assistance, military adjustment assistance, and aid essential to complete a democratic transition. The act authorizes a broader array of U.S. support should a democratically elected government take power. The act also provides procedures for suspending and ultimately terminating the U.S. embargo of Cuba. Congress could consider whether to modify the act or use it as a model for other countries under authoritarian regimes, such as Venezuela. Congress also could consider whether to maintain, lift, or adjust other restrictions on U.S. engagement with certain countries that have been governed by authoritarian regimes, such as the prohibition on DFC support for projects in Cuba and Venezuela, noted previously.²⁶⁸

Outlook

The second Trump Administration has begun to implement potentially far-reaching changes to U.S. foreign policy in the Western Hemisphere. Compared with its predecessors over the past 30 years, the Administration has shifted away from promoting democratic values and free trade and has placed greater emphasis on halting migration and limiting the influence of extra-hemispheric powers. The Administration also has relied more on the use of U.S. military force, tariffs, and sanctions to compel cooperation in the region.

The Trump Administration's policies appear to have achieved some of their immediate goals in the Western Hemisphere. These aims include significantly reducing unauthorized migration into the United States, killing some suspected drug traffickers, and capturing Maduro. The Administration's policies also appear to have contributed to Panama's annulment of port concessions along the Panama Canal that had been granted to a Hong Kong-based company; the election victories of some ideologically allied candidates and parties; and the conclusion of several new security, migration, and trade agreements with countries in the region.

The extent to which these initial successes will translate into the achievement of some of the Administration's strategic objectives remains to be seen. For example, there are few signs to date that many governments in the Western Hemisphere intend to significantly restrict or roll back PRC capital flows or technology. Likewise, available data suggest that the Administration's

²⁶⁷ See, for example, Xinyu Zhang, "Multitasking and Network-Building: China's Diplomacy in Latin America," *Ibero-América Studies*, vol. 8, no. 2 (2024); and State Council, People's Republic of China, "China's Policy Paper on Latin America and the Caribbean," December 10, 2025.

²⁶⁸ 22 U.S.C. §§9601(3) and 9612(e).

policies have not coincided with a reduction in drug trafficking into the United States or a reduction in the U.S. goods trade deficit with other Western Hemisphere partners. More broadly, the Administration's use of tariffs, sanctions, and the threat of military force to advance its agenda appears to be contributing to backlash in some parts of the region, including a deterioration in public opinions about the United States and some governments exploring alternative economic and security partnerships.

The longevity of the Trump Administration's policy shifts in the Western Hemisphere may depend, in part, on Congress. To date, the Administration generally has sought to implement its policies through executive actions and agreements. This approach may leave U.S. policies more susceptible to reversals due to legal challenges—as occurred with the IEEPA tariffs—or to changes in Administrations or Congresses. For the most part, the 119th Congress has not enacted legislation that would codify or overturn the Administration's policies in the region. At the same time, Congress has taken some steps to monitor and influence the Administration's approach, including by enacting reporting requirements and appropriating funds for certain initiatives at levels that differ from those requested by the Administration. Looking ahead, Congress may continue to assess the results of the Administration's policies in the region and could draw on its constitutional powers to further shape U.S. foreign policy in the Western Hemisphere.

Appendix. Selected Legislative Initiatives in the 119th Congress

The following tables include selected legislation considered during the 119th Congress (2025-2026) that relate to the Western Hemisphere, its subregions, and/or its countries. Legislation is listed in order of the latest substantive action in Congress.

Table A-I. Selected Enacted Legislation or Approved Resolutions Regarding the Western Hemisphere in the 119th Congress (2025-2026)

Legislation Number and Title	Date of Latest Substantive/Significant Action	Summary
P.L. 119-28, Rescissions Act of 2025	7/24/2025: Signed by President	Rescinds \$27 million for the Inter-American Foundation, among other unobligated balances appropriated in fiscal year 2025 (FY2025) for Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs.
P.L. 119-60, National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2026	12/18/2025: Signed by President	<p>NDAA. Mandates include permitting military medical cooperation with Canada among other countries; reporting semiannually on Department of Defense operations at the southern border including U.S. Southern Command’s efforts to deter illicit activities; reporting on joint training with Mexico to counter transnational criminal organizations; providing an “assessment of the military strategy, objectives and force posture of Russia that affect countries in Latin America and the Caribbean” in annual reports on Russian Federation’s security developments; and developing a strategy for countering transnational criminal organizations in Mexico.</p> <p>Department of State Authorization Act for FY2026 (Division E). Establishes in statute the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA), headed by an Assistant Secretary of State; establishes in statute the Office of Haitian Affairs within WHA; and authorizes the establishment of the Regional China Officer Program, mandating at least two Regional China Officers for WHA.</p> <p>Intelligence Authorization Act for FY2026 (Division F). Mandates include creating a National Intelligence Estimate on the Western Hemisphere; reporting on investments in Brazil’s agriculture sector by the People’s Republic of China; and creating a plan to enhance counternarcotics collaboration with Mexico.</p> <p>Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2025 (Division G). Mandates include creating an annual plan for Coast Guard operations in the Caribbean; requiring the Coast Guard Commandant, in consultation with other U.S. agency heads, to create a policy to address illicit trafficking by sea in the Caribbean, Eastern Pacific, and other regions; and updating the Canada-U.S. Joint Maritime Pollution Contingency Plan.</p> <p>BUST Fentanyl Act (Division H, Title LXXXIII, Subtitle B). Mandates include reporting on efforts to address fentanyl trafficking from countries such as Mexico as well as cooperation efforts with Mexico and Canada among others; annual reporting on efforts to prevent</p>

Legislation Number and Title	Date of Latest Substantive/Significant Action	Summary
P.L. 119-75, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026	2/03/2026: Signed by President	<p>methamphetamine smuggling from Mexico; and annual reporting “regarding the ties between criminal gangs and political and economic elites in Haiti” and the imposition of economic and visa sanctions on individuals identified.</p> <p>DFC Modernization and Reauthorization Act of 2025 (Division H, Title LXXXVII). Prohibits U.S. International Development Finance Corporation support for projects in Cuba and Venezuela, among other provisions.</p> <p>National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2026 (Division F). Mandates include providing at least \$30 million for Office of Cuba Broadcasting; providing assistance to counter the flow of fentanyl and other synthetic drugs from Mexico, among other countries; providing assistance priorities, conditions, and limitations for Central America, South America, and the Caribbean, with specific provisions regarding Colombia, Cuba, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Venezuela; requiring a spend plan for assistance to Colombia, the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, and the Central America Regional Security Initiative, among others.</p> <p>Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2026 (Division H). Mandates include extending special rules for Haiti under the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (P.L. 98-67) until December 31, 2026.</p>

Source: Compiled by the Congressional Research Service using Congress.gov.

Table A-2. Selected Additional Bills or Resolutions Considered Regarding the Western Hemisphere in the 119th Congress (2025-2026)

Bill Number and Title	Date of Latest Substantive/ Significant Action	Summary
S.J.Res. 37, A Joint Resolution Terminating the National Emergency Declared to Impose Duties on Articles Imported from Canada	4/2/2025: Passed Senate without amendment 51 – 48 (Record Vote Number: 160)	Would terminate the national emergency declared in E.O. 14193, “Imposing Duties to Address the Flow of Illicit Drugs Across Our Northern Border.”
H.R. 4490, PARTNER Act	9/02/2025: Passed House by voice vote	Would amend the International Organizations Immunities Act to extend privileges and immunities to certain additional international and regional organizations, including the Caribbean Community.
H.R. 3062, Promoting Cross-Border Energy Infrastructure Act	9/18/2025: Passed House 224 – 203 (Roll no. 277)	Would establish a new process for approving or revoking permits for construction and operation of energy infrastructure across a U.S. border with Canada or Mexico.
S.J.Res. 81, A Joint Resolution Terminating the National Emergency Declared to Impose Duties on Articles Imported from Brazil	10/28/2025: Passed Senate without amendment 52 – 48 (Record Vote Number: 594)	Would terminate the national emergency declared in E.O. 14323, “Addressing Threats to the United States by the Government of Brazil.”
S.J.Res. 77, A Joint Resolution Terminating the National Emergency Declared to Impose Duties on Articles Imported from Canada	10/29/2025: Passed Senate without amendment 50 – 46 (Record Vote Number: 598)	Would terminate the national emergency declared in E.O. 14193, “Imposing Duties to Address the Flow of Illicit Drugs Across Our Northern Border.”
H.R. 4070, Tren de Aragua Border Security Threat Assessment Act	11/19/2025: Passed House by voice vote	Would require the Department of Homeland Security to submit a border threat assessment and strategic plan regarding Tren de Aragua and other transnational criminal organizations.
H.Con.Res. 61, Directing the President, Pursuant to Section 5(c) of the War Powers Resolution, to Remove United States Armed Forces from Hostilities with Presidentially Designated Terrorist Organizations in the Western Hemisphere	12/17/2025: Motion to reconsider laid on the table, agreed to without objection following failed vote 210 – 216 (Roll no. 345)	Would direct the President to remove U.S. Armed Forces from hostilities with any presidentially designated terrorist organization in the Western Hemisphere unless a declaration of war or authorization to use military force is enacted.
H.Con.Res. 64, To Direct the Removal of United States Armed Forces from Hostilities Within or Against Venezuela That Have Not Been Authorized by Congress	12/17/2025: Motion to reconsider laid on the table, agreed to without objection following failed vote 211 – 213 (Roll no. 346)	Would direct the President to remove U.S. Armed Forces from hostilities within or against Venezuela unless a declaration of war or authorization to use military force is enacted.

Bill Number and Title	Date of Latest Substantive/ Significant Action	Summary
H.R. 6504, Haiti Economic Lift Program Extension Act	1/12/2026: Passed House 345-45 (Roll no. 15)	Would extend special rules for Haiti under the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (P.L. 98-67) until December 31, 2028.
H.Con.Res. 68, To Direct the Removal of United States Armed Forces from Venezuela That Have Not Been Authorized by Congress	1/22/2026: Motion to reconsider laid on the table, agreed to without objection following failed vote 215 – 215 (Roll no. 48)	Would direct the President to remove U.S. Armed Forces from Venezuela unless a declaration of war or authorization to use military force is enacted.
H.J.Res. 72, Relating to a National Emergency by the President on February 1, 2025	2/11/2026: Passed House 219 – 211 (Roll no. 65)	Would terminate the national emergency declared in E.O. 14193, “Imposing Duties to Address the Flow of Illicit Drugs Across Our Northern Border.”
H.R. 1689, To Require the Secretary of Homeland Security to Designate Haiti for Temporary Protected Status	4/16/2026: Passed House 224 – 204 (Roll no. 120)	Would direct the Department of Homeland Security to designate Haiti for Temporary Protected Status for 18 months beginning August 3, 2025.
H.R. 7567, Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026	4/30/2026: Passed House 224 – 200 (Roll no. 154)	Provisions would require a report on how expected or implemented modifications to the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement could affect the importation or exportation of certain agricultural commodities; express the sense of Congress that any U.S. trade agreement with Argentina that allows Argentina to export beef into the U.S. market under expanded quotas is detrimental to domestic ranchers, cattle producers, and cattle markets; require a report on the effect of such imported beef from Argentina on domestic beef and cattle markets; establish a Rio Grande Valley Agricultural Water Interagency Working Group to coordinate a U.S. strategy to protect the economic interests of U.S. agricultural producers impacted by water deliveries under the 1944 U.S.-Mexico Water Treaty; require a report on the findings, work, and recommendations of that interagency working group.

Source: Compiled by CRS using Congress.gov.

Notes: E.O. = executive order; NORTHCOM = U.S. Northern Command; SOUTHCOM = U.S. Southern Command.

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