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The Trump administration's strategy in the face of global instability

Introduction

The current international strategic environment is characterized by the convergence of regional conflicts, great-power rivalries, and the proliferation of non-state actors. Within this context, the United States Administration has adopted an approach that broadens the concept of threat, integrating terrorism, organized crime, and interstate competition into a single strategic framework¹.

This strategy requires simultaneous action across multiple theaters, with particular attention to critical maritime spaces and global energy flows².

Beyond previous strategic visions, the Trump Administration is advancing a new approach which seeks, among other objectives, to demonstrate to the international community that, at present, the United States is the only power capable of exerting global influence across a wide spectrum of domains (multidomain), ranging from the military—or more broadly, security—domain to the economic sphere. This posture is designed to confront China, Russia, and even the European Union as potential global or sectorial competitors. It is not an improvised or inconsistent response, but rather the outcome of a strategy formulated by Trump and his team.

Doctrinal Framework

The Global Hybrid Threat

The U.S. global strategy is grounded in an expanded conception of threat, encompassing revisionist states, terrorist organizations, transnational criminal networks and hybrid actors.

Within this framework, Iran emerges as the principal strategic adversary, while Cuba and Venezuela constitute focal points of instability in the Western Hemisphere.

From a doctrinal perspective, this approach aligns partially with the concepts of great-power strategic competition and cooperative security, yet it places greater emphasis on unilateral action and coercion. It also “revives” a concept rooted in the Monroe Doctrine — that of “Hemispheric Security.”

Historical patterns reveal that U.S. foreign policy has been characterized by a cyclical

¹ Department of Defense: National Defense Strategy, 2025

² U.S. Navy: Advantage at Sea, 2024.

oscillation between isolationism and interventionism, predominantly shaped by prevailing geopolitical constraints and imperatives. Within this framework, the United States is currently prioritizing an enhanced strategic posture in the Indo-Pacific, aimed at balancing and closely monitoring China's rising influence. At the same time, Washington continues to privilege the Western Hemisphere as a core sphere of interest, eschewing territorial retrenchment in favor of reaffirming its hegemonic role and its willingness to project power and intervene in its immediate regional periphery.

What may appear different today is the personality of Donald Trump, who is not a "conventional" politician and undoubtedly accentuates or dramatizes some of these strategic dynamics.

A Doctrine That Reappears Every Century: 1823, 1904, 2025

For many analysts, Trump is reviving the Monroe Doctrine, which emerged in the early nineteenth century; however, he is neither the first nor likely the last to "bring it back."

The Monroe Doctrine responded to a fundamental geopolitical need of the United States—its absence of direct threats within its geographic environment—which explains its persistence, albeit with varying emphases over time. It bears the name of the country's fifth president, James Monroe (1817–1825), although it was formulated by John Quincy Adams, his Secretary of State and successor in the presidency (1825–1829).

In 1904, President Theodore Roosevelt articulated the corollary that would come to bear his name, proclaiming "America" —conceived as the entire continental space— as the sphere of interest of the United States. What had initially functioned as a largely defensive doctrine designed to shield the emerging union of thirteen colonies from European imperial powers was thereby transformed into an explicitly outward-looking and interventionist stance, reflective of an ascending power seeking recognition and influence within the international system. This strategic reorientation was powerfully symbolized by the 1907 deployment of the Great White Fleet, which marked the United States' transition toward extra-regional power projection and a global maritime outlook.

Donald Trump's return to the White House in 2025 has signaled a renewed embrace of the Monroe Doctrine, reinterpreted not in response to the European colonial or expansionist dynamics that characterized the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but rather as a strategic framework aimed principally at counterbalancing China's growing

expansion.

The renewed interest of the Trump Administration in the Western Hemisphere was initially labeled by analysts as “Monroe Doctrine 2.0” and later as the “Donroe Doctrine,” a play on words that Trump himself adopted. Nonetheless, official documents have correctly designated it as the “Trump Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine.” This terminology appears in the National Security Strategy of November 2025 and in the Department of Defense’s accompanying National Defense Strategy of January 2026.

The Pentagon’s document—now issued under the reinstated name Department of War—states that Trump began his second term amid “one of the most dangerous security environments” in U.S. history. Domestically, “U.S. borders were overwhelmed, narcoterrorists and other enemies became more powerful across the Western Hemisphere, and U.S. access to key territories such as the Panama Canal and Greenland was increasingly in doubt.”

Although references to the Panama Canal and Greenland had already appeared in Trump’s prior term, their inclusion in this official document is significant—particularly Greenland’s—since it formally incorporates the Arctic island into the geographic perimeter of the Western Hemisphere, thus subjecting it to the updated Monroe Doctrine. While Greenland has always been geographically part of the hemisphere, it has rarely been imagined as part of the “Americas.”

In the emerging world order, Washington seeks to secure the natural resources of its hemisphere—and prevent access to them by rival powers. With interoceanic supply chains increasingly uncertain, the United States aims to preserve those linked to its immediate geographic environment, where offshoring remains feasible due to lower labor costs.

The novelty vis-à-vis the Monroe Doctrine of the previous two centuries lies not so much in patterns of economic exploitation as in, first, the securitization of the immediate neighborhood itself, which is framed as a direct source of threats—including irregular migration, drug trafficking, organized crime, and narco-terrorism—thereby providing the rationale to legitimize interventionist policies, even of a military nature, within that geographical space; and, second, in the expansion of the doctrine’s territorial scope of application, which extends to Greenland and, by extension, brings Canada within its

ambit.

Iran and the control of energy Choke Points

Maritime chokepoints are narrow sea passages linking major bodies of water and constitute critical nodes in global trade, given the forced concentration of transit flows. Their limited spatial configuration further facilitates the control and potential disruption of key transportation routes with minimal material and military resources.

In this context, Iran plays a central role due to its influence over the Strait of Hormuz, since control of this maritime passage is essential for the stability of global energy trade³. For this reason, the outbreak of open war between the United States and Iran in late February 2026 marks a significant escalation in Middle Eastern tensions. Large-scale bombardments conducted jointly by the United States and Israel launched the campaign on 28 February, culminating in the death of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

According to analysts, the operation has created a scenario in which the United States and Israel possess "total air control" over Iran, altering the regional balance of power—while acknowledging that Iran retains considerable regional projection capacity and a network of proxy actors that make it particularly sensitive within the broader geostrategic equilibrium.

Trump's four Strategic Objectives

In an official statement, President Trump publicly outlined the four objectives guiding the military offensive against Iran.

The first is the "destruction of Iran's ballistic capabilities," achieved by neutralizing one of the pillars of Iran's defensive strategy: its vast program of medium- and long-range missiles, which in recent days—at the time of writing this piece—he claims has been struck.

The second objective has been defined as the "annihilation of the Iranian Navy." Iran's naval presence in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz is viewed as a direct threat to global energy security. Trump stated that his campaign aims to destroy it in order to

³ International Energy Agency: World Energy Outlook, 2025.

ensure freedom of navigation.

Third, he seeks to “prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon”: the White House maintains that Tehran must be left unable to produce or acquire military nuclear capabilities.

Finally, he aims to “contain Iranian-aligned armed groups”: the offensive seeks to curb Iran's influence in the region, particularly over militias in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen.

An unlikely coalition and the Strait of Hormuz dilemma

Trump has exerted pressure on European and Asian allies to form a military coalition aimed at reopening the Strait of Hormuz, which has been effectively blocked by Tehran. Initially, however, both the European Union and NATO declined to participate, deeming the operation excessively risky.

Nevertheless, at the time of writing, the U.S. initiative appears to be yielding partial results. On 20 March, approximately fifteen countries joined the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Japan—nations that had already expressed their willingness to “contribute to efforts” to ensure safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz, despite earlier controversy surrounding their refusal to support President Trump's proposed naval mission.

The turning point seems to be linked to recent Iranian attacks on unarmed commercial vessels in the Gulf. As a result, additional countries—Canada, South Korea, New Zealand, Denmark, Latvia, Slovenia, Estonia, Norway, Sweden, Finland, the Czech Republic, Romania, Bahrain, and Lithuania—have now agreed to collaborate.

For its part, the United States has shifted to a full offensive posture to reopen the Strait. After three weeks of conflict, Washington has deployed 5,000 Marines and assault ships to neutralize Iranian defenses and avert a global economic collapse, following statements by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu suggesting that a limited ground operation might be necessary.

Why is this passage so important?

The strait represents the primary choke point of the global energy system. Roughly 20% of the world's oil and gas flows through its waters, along with a significant share of global helium and fertilizer shipments. Iran has succeeded in closing this passage using mines,

drones, and missiles, triggering a surge in prices and posing the risk of an unprecedented international financial crisis.

Another potential course of action would involve seizing the strategic island of Kharg, Iran's major oil terminal and an important military hub.

Strategic Risks: Regime change and regional escalation

Independent analysts warn that Trump has embarked on the biggest gamble in foreign policy of his presidency and, to that end, has publicly set the goal of regime change in Tehran, despite the fact that air power has never achieved such transformations without ground forces.

Nevertheless, this entails a risk that the war could turn into a regional conflagration, given Iran's influence in numerous countries and among armed groups in the surrounding area. Finally, the operation undertaken goes beyond the approach of "limited strikes" applied in other scenarios, such as Venezuela, and opens the door to a longer-lasting conflict.

Maritime implications

The confrontation with Iran has a maritime dimension, with several critical aspects, such as control of the Strait of Hormuz—a declared U.S. objective to restore freedom of navigation—which could require both an expanded deployment of naval combat groups and clearance operations against Iranian mines and fast attack craft, as well as the conduct of multinational patrols (if such cooperation ultimately materializes).

Another implication lies in the vulnerability of maritime energy traffic: any incident in the Strait of Hormuz increases maritime insurance costs, the risks of interdiction of civilian vessels, and the possibility of Iranian reprisals against allied ships or regional port infrastructure.

All of this is highly relevant for allied maritime defense. Specifically, with regard to European navies, this scenario calls for enhanced monitoring of U.S. force projection, an assessment of possible indirect effects on energy routes to Europe, and close observation of the Iranian response in secondary theaters such as the Red Sea or the Mediterranean.

Middle East: Core of the Strategic Confrontation

Israel and Gaza

Support for Israel remains a structural element of U.S. policy, and operations in Gaza are

integrated into a broader strategy aimed at containing the Iranian axis.

U.S. policy toward Gaza in recent years (2025–2026) has been shaped by three main pillars: military and diplomatic support for Israel, direct leadership in ceasefire and reconstruction initiatives and use of veto power and international pressure in multilateral forums.

Regarding sustained military and diplomatic assistance, the United States has been Israel's principal ally—particularly in its war in Gaza—providing full diplomatic backing, weaponry, and substantial military support, while issuing public statements affirming Israel's "right to self-defense." This support has been decisive in sustaining the Israeli offensive, which has resulted in a severe humanitarian crisis and international accusations of genocide.

Through its frequent use of the veto at the United Nations Security Council, the United States has repeatedly blocked resolutions calling for an immediate ceasefire, the release of hostages, and unrestricted humanitarian access. In September 2025, the United States vetoed for the sixth time a resolution demanding a ceasefire in Gaza, despite the support of the other fourteen Council members.

Additionally, since 2025, under the Trump Administration, the United States has designed and promoted several initiatives to reorganize and govern Gaza in the post-war period.

First, there is the so-called "Comprehensive Peace Plan for Gaza," adopted by the UN Security Council in November 2025, which includes a cessation of hostilities, the return of hostages, the demilitarization of Gaza, the establishment of an "International Stabilization Force," the creation of a transitional government run by Palestinian technocrats under international supervision, and a large-scale reconstruction program.

To this end, a UN-endorsed structure was created in which Donald Trump chairs a *Board of Peace*, an international body tasked with governing and rebuilding Gaza. The *National Committee for the Administration of Gaza* (NCAG), led by technocrats and subject to strong U.S. oversight, is established, along with a "mega-project"—style reconstruction plan that envisions transforming Gaza into an entirely new urban space, with residential towers, technology hubs, tourist complexes, and infrastructure designed from the ground up, including a major port and an airport.

The project, part of the reconstruction agenda promoted by the Trump administration, is

contingent on the establishment of security and demilitarization in the area and would require investments of at least \$25 billion. Although Kushner argues that it could be built within a few years, international organizations warn that the current devastation points to a much longer and more complex process.

The United States has also pushed negotiations to maintain the ceasefire, manage compliance with the peace plan, and contain attacks, thereby preventing the truce from collapsing.

Lebanon: Indirect projection of the conflict

In Lebanon, the presence of Hezbollah constitutes a potential front for escalation. Its close links to Iran make it a key actor in regional dynamics⁴.

The United States considers that the ceasefire reached in 2024 in Lebanon has not been effective, and while Washington seeks to use its diplomatic influence to stabilize the region, it maintains that it cannot compel Israel to alter its posture regarding airstrikes. Moreover, the U.S. continues to classify Hezbollah as a terrorist organization and supports the position that all weapons should remain under the exclusive control of the Lebanese state.

In parallel, and due to the deterioration in security triggered by the escalation between Iran and Israel, the United States has ordered the evacuation of part of its non-essential personnel from Lebanon, warning of increasing regional volatility and urging its citizens to exercise maximum caution.

The Red Sea and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait

In 2026, tensions in the Red Sea—and particularly in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, one of the world's most strategic maritime passages—have risen significantly as a result of escalating conflict in the Middle East.

At present, there are persistent threats of closure in that area by the Houthis (Yemen): the Houthi rebels, allied with Iran, have warned that they will shut down the Bab el-Mandeb Strait in retaliation for U.S. and Israeli attacks in the region. They claim they will target vessels from countries that take part in offensives against Iran, Lebanon, Palestine, or Iraq. Such a closure would have a massive impact on the global economy

⁴ CORDESMAN, A. CSIS Reports on Iran and Hezbollah, 2024.

by blocking a vital route for trade between Asia and Europe.

For its part, Iran hints at extending the conflict to the strait: Iran has suggested that it could expand the maritime crisis to the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, using the Houthis as a tool to pressure the United States and Israel without directly committing its own forces. This would turn the strait into a "second Hormuz," capable of dealing a severe blow to international shipping.

Attacks and blockades against vessels linked to Israel have also been reported: since 2025, Houthi forces have expanded their operations by targeting ships linked to Israel as part of a maritime blockade. They regard as a "legitimate target" any shipping company that maintains commercial ties with Israeli ports.

All of this has a global impact on trade: the Red Sea and Bab el-Mandeb are critical routes, through which approximately 10–12% of global maritime trade and about 8.8 million barrels of oil per day transit. A blockade would force ships to divert around the Cape of Good Hope, adding roughly 10 days to the journey and dramatically increasing logistical costs.

Doctrinal Approach: Hybrid and multidomain warfare

The conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon reflect an evolution toward forms of hybrid warfare, in which there is both a combination of conventional and irregular means, as well as the use of information and propaganda and the integration of the land, maritime, and air domains.

This model presents significant challenges for conventional armed forces and, within the Euro-Atlantic environment, the evolution of these conflicts directly affects both NATO and the European Union.

For Europe, the main implications concern energy security, the management of migratory flows, and the stability of the Mediterranean region.

For Spain, the consequences are particularly relevant.

First, geographic proximity reinforces the Mediterranean as a strategic priority area. Second, the Spanish Navy plays a key role in maritime security operations, naval presence in the Mediterranean, as well as in its participation in international missions.

Third, interoperability with allies requires maintaining advanced naval capabilities tailored to hybrid conflict scenarios.

Hemispheric Security

General Overview

Hemispheric security has re-emerged as one of the United States' most significant strategic priorities in 2026. After years in which Latin America occupied a secondary position on Washington's agenda, the emergence of new threats—from transnational organized crime to China's expanding geopolitical presence—has driven the White House to redesign its approach to the Western Hemisphere. The result is a combination of renewed military doctrine, selective alliances, and a reconfiguration of regional cooperation mechanisms.

One of the pillars of this new architecture is Shield of the Americas, a security coalition announced on 7 March 2026 that brings together seventeen countries under a framework of cooperation in intelligence, public security, and military capabilities. Although initially presented as an initiative against drug cartels, its scope is far broader: it represents the most profound restructuring of the regional security system since the end of the Cold War, integrating police, regulatory, and potentially military tools to confront transnational criminal networks. The strategy also seeks to counter China's growing influence in ports, telecommunications, and logistical corridors across the continent—areas where illicit and geopolitical interests converge⁵.

This new paradigm is connected to the concept of Integrated Deterrence, a doctrine that merges U.S. technological, cyber, and military capabilities with those of carefully selected partners based on political alignment.

The Miami Summit marked the end of inclusive multilateral cooperation and the consolidation of a security system built around nodes of power aligned with Washington. The 15% increase in military assistance funding for countries interoperable with U.S. Southern Command reflects this strategic selectivity, rewarding political alignment with access to advanced technologies and capabilities previously out of reach⁶.

⁵ MEJÍA, S., & ÁLVAREZ, R. (10 March 2026). SHIELD OF THE AMERICAS: Redesign of hemispheric security architecture and its financial, regulatory, and geopolitical implications. Asimetric.net. Retrieved from: <https://asimetric.net/2026/03/10/shield-of-the-americas-rediseño-de-la-arquitectura-de-seguridad-hemisferica-y-sus-implicaciones-financieras-regulatorias-y-geopoliticas/>

⁶ CARO ESCALANTE, S. (15 March 2026). The Shield of the Americas: Integrated deterrence and the new hemispheric security architecture. EscenarioMundial.com. Retrieved from: <https://www.escenariomundial.com/2026/03/15/el-escudo-de-las-americas-disuasion-integrada-y-la-nueva-arquitectura-de-seguridad-hemisferica/>

This shift forms part of a broader process: the strategic return of the United States to the hemisphere. In accordance with the 2025 National Security Strategy, Washington asserts that its prosperity and security depend on maintaining a preeminent position in the region. China's growing presence in strategic sectors across Latin America has served as a catalyst for this repositioning. The U.S.-led operation that captured the Venezuelan dictator in January 2026 symbolizes this renewed and more interventionist approach⁷.

At the doctrinal level, the 2026 National Defense Strategy places Latin America at the center of its focus, prioritizing the defense of U.S. territory and the Western Hemisphere. The document argues that regional allies must assume greater responsibility for their own defense, while the United States concentrates on deterring China and enhancing border security. In linking migration, organized crime, and transnational threats, the strategy is described as a "Trump Corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine, reaffirming the hemisphere as an exclusive strategic zone for the United States.

Venezuela: Transition and strategic opportunity

The relationship between the United States and Venezuela underwent profound transformations during the first months of 2026, completely redefining a bilateral dynamic that had been marked for years by confrontation. The turning point occurred with the capture of Nicolás Maduro by U.S. forces on 3 January 2026, an event that triggered an internal political reorganization in Caracas and reshaped Washington's assessment of the Venezuelan threat. Following this development, the United States reclassified the South American country as a "lesser threat," according to the 2026 Annual Threat Assessment Report issued by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

The new interim government headed by Delcy Rodríguez has shown signs of openness and cooperation with Washington. Among the most significant measures are the release of several political prisoners under an amnesty program and the declared intent to liberalize the Venezuelan economy—particularly the energy sector—in an effort to revitalize oil and gas production. These steps enabled the United States to relax certain sanctions on strategic sectors, allowing Venezuela to resume part of its activity in

⁷ DÍAZ-ROSILLO, C. (16 March 2026). The strategic return of the United States to the hemisphere. Infobae. Retrieved from: <https://www.infobae.com/america/opinion/2026/03/16/el-regreso-estrategico-de-estados-unidos-al-hemisferio/>

international markets⁸.

At the diplomatic level, the two countries formally re-established relations on 5 March 2026, after seven years of rupture. The agreement includes the reopening of embassies and a cooperation framework conditioned on political reforms and democratic guarantees by Caracas. This restoration marks a notable shift in hemispheric policy, reintegrating Venezuela into the U.S. diplomatic sphere.

However, despite these advancements, Washington warns that Venezuela continues to face internal volatility linked to organized crime, political instability, and the influence of external actors such as China, Russia, and Iran—whose interests may compete with those of the United States in the region.

The country thus becomes a key component of hemispheric energy security⁹.

Cuba: Pressure and potential political change

U.S. policy toward Cuba in 2026 is characterized by a combination of maximum pressure, energy encirclement, direct regime-change threats, and discreet negotiations that create an environment of strategic uncertainty.

Maximum pressure and energy blockade: Since late January 2026, the Trump Administration has intensified an oil blockade that has left Cuba without fuel for weeks. Washington declared a “national emergency” with respect to Cuba and authorized tariffs against any country supplying oil to the island, leading Mexico to halt its shipments. This has resulted in widespread blackouts, gasoline rationing, transportation paralysis, and a reduction of essential public services¹⁰.

Cuba as an “exceptional threat: The U.S. government considers Cuba an “exceptional threat” due to its ties with Russia, China, and Iran, which reinforces political and economic pressure on Havana. Trump has explicitly suggested that redefining Cuba policy may require directly shaping the island's political future, including insinuations of possible military action.

⁸ Agencia EFE. (2026). U.S. intelligence report considers Venezuela a lesser threat in 2026. Ecuavisa. Retrieved from: <https://www.ecuavisa.com/mundo/informe-inteligencia-ee.uu.-venezuela-amenaza-menor-2026-20260319-0077.html>

⁹ IMF / World Bank. Reports on Venezuela, 2024–2025.

¹⁰ HERNÁNDEZ OROZCO, F. (17 March 2026). The United States tightens its blockade on Cuba to force regime change. Diario Expansión (Mexico). Retrieved from: <https://expansion.mx/mundo/2026/03/17/que-esta-pasando-en-cuba-estados-unidos-cierra-cerco>

Threats of intervention or a U.S. “takeover” of the island: In several public statements, President Trump has asserted that he could “take Cuba” or “liberate it,” claiming he has the right to “do whatever he wants” with the island. These remarks come in a context where the United States has already carried out direct military actions in the region, such as the capture of Maduro.

Discreet negotiations between Washington and Havana: Despite the pressure campaign, negotiations between both governments are underway, although their terms have not been publicly disclosed. According to Cuba, the discussions aim to find “solutions through dialogue” amid the energy crisis and the threat of U.S. intervention.

Washington's objectives: transition or control: It remains unclear whether the United States seeks to impose deep economic reforms without demanding immediate political changes (as in Venezuela), force a regime change and the removal of Díaz-Canel, or even establish some form of U.S. tutelage over Cuba. Most analysts agree that all these possibilities are currently on the table¹¹.

Mexico: Redefining security

Mexico has acquired strategic relevance as migratory concerns and organized crime have become integrated into the U.S. national security framework. As a result, the Mexico–United States relationship in 2026 is marked by radicalized political discourse, though without any real signs of diplomatic rupture.

Security and narcotics trafficking as the main pressure point: The *2026 Annual Threat Assessment* of the U.S. intelligence community identifies Mexico as a key focal point for narcotics trafficking, migration, and border security. Washington designates the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel as the primary actors responsible for trafficking fentanyl, methamphetamine, heroin, and cocaine into the United States¹². Despite a 56% reduction in fentanyl seizures since 2025, the border remains a critical zone due to persistent migration routes, entrenched criminal networks, and illicit

¹¹ BLANCO, S. (22 March 2026). Havana and Washington maintain opaque negotiations amid Cuba's worst crisis in decades. *Diario El País*. Retrieved from:

<https://elpais.com/us/2026-03-22/la-habana-y-washington-mantienen-unas-negociaciones-opacas-en-medio-de-la-mayor-crisis-de-cuba-en-decadas.html>

¹² OSTOS, M. (18 March 2026). U.S. Threat Assessment mentions Mexico in relation to migration, drugs, and the border. *UnoTV.com*. Retrieved from:

<https://www.unotv.com/estados-unidos/evaluacion-anual-amenazas-eeuu-2026-mexico-narcotrafico-migracion/>

trafficking activities.

Migration: strengthened U.S. border surveillance has reduced migrant encounters since 2025. However, structural factors such as violence, inequality, and limited economic opportunities in Mexico continue to sustain migratory pressure toward the United States.

Growing cooperation by the government of Claudia Sheinbaum: the Mexican administration has stepped up cooperation with Washington, notably through the extradition of 29 criminal leaders to the United States between February and March 2025 (including Rafael Caro Quintero), the deployment of 10,000 members of the National Guard, with results including the seizure of more than 1,200 kg of drugs in a single week¹³, and the destruction of 192 clandestine laboratories and 1,600 arrests over the course of a few months.

This cooperation has been further strengthened through bilateral meetings and the creation of a Trilateral Coordination Center (Mexico–U.S.–Canada) for security during the 2026 World Cup¹⁴.

In January 2026, statements circulated from U.S. politicians suggesting “military actions” against cartels in Mexico, which generated media concern.

However, geopolitical analyses rule out an invasion scenario, pointing to the strong trade ties under the USMCA (T-MEC), deep economic interdependence, the active security cooperation¹⁵ already in place, and the fact that Washington continues to prioritize coordination, intelligence sharing, and joint efforts rather than unilateral operations.

Greenland

Greenland, a resource-rich island covering an area of approximately 2.16 million square kilometers, is a former Danish colony and now an autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark. Located in the Arctic, it occupies a strategically significant geopolitical position between the United States and Europe and lies astride the so-called GIUK Gap—a maritime corridor between Greenland, Iceland, and the United Kingdom

¹³ CARVAJAL, F. (13 January 2026). Between cooperation and coercion: Mexico–United States relations toward 2026. Nexos. Retrieved from: <https://seguridad.nexos.com.mx/entre-cooperacion-y-coercion-la-relacion-mexico-estados-unidos-hacia-2026/>

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵ MXC.com. (2026). Is a U.S. invasion of Mexico possible in 2026? Geopolitical analysis and reality. Retrieved from: <https://mxc.com.mx/2026/01/13/es-posible-una-invasion-de-estados-unidos-a-mexico-en-2026-analisis-geopolitico-y-realidad/>

that connects the Arctic region with the Atlantic Ocean.

Greenland occupies a strategically significant geopolitical position between the United States and Europe, situated over the so-called *GIUK Gap*—a maritime corridor between Greenland, Iceland, and the United Kingdom that connects the Arctic to the Atlantic Ocean. Its abundant natural resources, which include oil, gas, and rare-earth minerals, further enhance its strategic importance, particularly at a time when China has leveraged its dominance in the rare-earth industry to exert pressure on the United States. These minerals are increasingly essential to the global economy, as they are required for manufacturing everything from electric vehicles and wind turbines to military equipment.

Greenland's mineral wealth could become more accessible as the climate crisis continues to melt Arctic ice, a phenomenon that is also making northern maritime routes navigable for longer periods each year. This development could reconfigure trade patterns and further elevate the region's strategic relevance—despite Trump's characterization of the climate crisis as “the greatest hoax.”

Trump has downplayed the value of Greenland's natural resources, stating to reporters last month: “*We need Greenland for national security, not for the minerals*”¹⁶.

Relations with other key actors in U.S. Strategic formulation

Competition among the United States, China, and Russia has entered one of its most tense and complex phases since the end of the Cold War. The international environment in 2026 is defined by disputes across multiple domains: military, economic, technological, and geopolitical.

China: The principal strategic rival

According to recent strategic analyses, China has become the most significant challenge to U.S. supremacy due to its rapid economic and military growth, the country's geopolitical expansion in the Indo-Pacific, and its technological modernization in Artificial Intelligence (AI), cyber defense, and space capabilities.

In February 2026, Trump and Xi Jinping held a phone call addressing sensitive issues

¹⁶ Univisión. (21 January 2026). Greenland: Trump withdraws tariff threats as tensions decrease with European countries and NATO. Retrieved from: <https://www.univision.com/noticias/estados-unidos/trump-cancela-aranceles-paises-europa-acuerdo-otan-groenlandia-2026>

such as Taiwan, Ukraine, and commercial competition. Although the exchange had a tone of relative de-escalation, China warned the United States that it would not tolerate arms sales to Taiwan nor any attempt to hinder its “reunification.”

China demands respect for its sovereignty and maintains a firm stance regarding Taiwan, which it considers an inalienable part of its territory, the South China Sea, where it denounces what it describes as U.S. and allied “provocations.

For its part, Washington is pursuing a strategy of containment and multidomain engagement, focused on maintaining global military and technological superiority, strengthening alliances such as NATO and Indo-Pacific partnerships, and expanding capabilities in cyber defense, space, and economic deterrence.

The United States asserts that it does not seek open conflict with China, but it will defend what it defines as its “vital interests” in the Asia-Pacific region.

Russia: A disruptive actor

Russia maintains an openly revisionist foreign policy and positions itself as a direct rival to Washington, particularly through the war in Ukraine, the promotion of a new multipolar order, and the expansion of its influence in Eurasia and the Arctic.

Furthermore, Russia's military cooperation with China has intensified: China supplies Russia with nearly 70% of its machinery and 90% of its semiconductors, both essential to Moscow's war effort. In return, Russia is reportedly sharing sensitive military technology with China, including advances in submarine capabilities. More recently, North Korea has joined militarily in support of Russia, adding a new layer of complexity to the strategic landscape.

This trilateral alignment—Russia–China–North Korea—has raised serious concerns within the Pentagon regarding security in the Indo-Pacific region.

Russia–China coordination

Both powers seek to displace the United States from global leadership by constructing an alternative multipolar order, with the aim of attracting the “Global South” to support their strategic agendas. Their core narrative centers on opposing the “Western liberal order” and presenting a geopolitical alternative more favorable to non-aligned countries.

Conclusions

This study has sought to demonstrate, through an analytical assessment of multiple scenarios, that the U.S. strategy exhibits coherence in its global conception, grounded in the integration of diverse threats into a single operational framework.

However, it poses significant risks, such as regional escalation in the Middle East, strategic overstretch, and potential limitations in post-conflict stabilization.

From a naval perspective, a clear trend becomes evident: The control of maritime spaces and energy flows constitutes the core of contemporary strategic power, a domain in which the United States—under the Trump Administration—undoubtedly seeks to assert dominance.

Considering the various scenarios analyzed, the following conclusions may be drawn:

Iran

The Trump Administration's strategy toward Iran combines ambitious military objectives, erratic diplomatic pressure, and a high risk of escalation. The offensive aims to paralyze Iran's military capacity, pressure for regime change, and secure the most sensitive energy route on the planet.

However, the lack of international consensus limits the effectiveness of operations in the Strait of Hormuz. Contradictions between official justifications undermine strategic coherence, and the precedent of rapid interventions (such as in Venezuela) contrasts sharply with the magnitude of the Iranian challenge.

Israel and Gaza

U.S. policy combines steadfast support for Israel, even in international forums such as the UN, with direct involvement in shaping Gaza's future political and economic framework, an unprecedented level of presence through the peace plan and the transitional government, and an approach of "active diplomacy," always operating within a framework defined by U.S. geopolitical interests.

Summarizing, the United States not only supports Israel but seeks to shape Gaza's future according to its own strategic and political vision, even if this dynamic contributes to

regional radicalization and prolongation of the conflict¹⁷.

Middle East

The Trump Administration's strategy in the Middle East has strengthened Israel's role and intensified the indirect confrontation with Iran, turning the Gaza and Lebanon theaters into components of a broader regional dynamic.

From a strategic standpoint, maritime dominance emerges as an essential factor in regional stability, especially in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Red Sea.

For Spain, this environment requires heightened attention to the nearby maritime domain and an active commitment to collective security within NATO and the European Union.

Hemispheric Security

Since 2025, the United States has repositioned Hemispheric Security among its top strategic priorities.

Taken together, these transformations outline a landscape that will consolidate a renewed U.S. hegemony, based on: Strategic selectivity. integrated deterrence and a deep restructuring of regional cooperation.

Latin America ceases to be a peripheral space and once again becomes a central arena for global security and competition in the twenty-first century.

Regarding Venezuela, since 2026 Washington has adopted a policy of openness, pragmatism, and caution, where diplomatic progress coexists with persistent structural challenges. This trajectory suggests a reconfiguration of the regional balance.

In relation to Cuba, U.S. policy combines extreme economic pressure, energy isolation, direct threats, and opaque negotiations—the most aggressive stance toward Havana in decades—aimed at reshaping the island's political direction under direct U.S. influence.

The relationship with Mexico is considered crucial to U.S. domestic security, particularly with regard to fentanyl, migration, and border control.

In this context, Mexico is showing greater cooperation by aligning itself with U.S. priorities, while the United States' "tough rhetoric" has not translated into hostile actions, though it does set the political tone. Given the marked mutual dependence, a model of cooperation

¹⁷ NYE, J. Do Morals Matter? Oxford University Press, 2021.

under pressure prevails, with measures that include the militarization of the fight against cartels, the potential projection of extraterritorial operations, and impacts on illicit maritime routes.

Finally, Donald Trump has revived his interest in acquiring or controlling Greenland, invoking national security concerns and the need to prevent Russian and Chinese influence in the Arctic. At the World Economic Forum in Davos, Trump called for "immediate negotiations" regarding the island and announced a preliminary framework of understanding after meeting with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte. In this context, he lifted planned tariffs on several European countries as leverage to secure acceptance of his proposal. Trump asserted that the United States would not use force but emphasized that it remains the only country capable of guaranteeing Greenland's strategic protection.

China and Russia as strategic rivals

The current relationship between the United States, China, and Russia is one of structural strategic competition, in which China is the main long-term rival, while Russia is the actor that directly challenges the international order through disruptive tactics. Military cooperation between the two amplifies the challenge for Washington and underscores that, despite occasional moments of dialogue, rivalry remains the dominant axis of global politics.

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