

Why Latin America Rejects US Military Presence

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Region: [Latin America & Caribbean, USA](#)

Global Research, March 28, 2015

Ever since the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 the United States has claimed territorial rights to the Western Hemisphere, essentially warning the rest of the world to back off from USA's backyard. The American way of proclaiming itself the big cheese of the New World manifested by quickly ousting colonial competitor Spain from Florida and the Southwest and two decades later declaring war on Mexico, stealing a third of its sovereign territory to ensure that Texas, New Mexico and Arizona became part of the bountiful chosen nation fast expanding from sea to shining sea. Next came more than a century of constant [military interventions](#) from the 1850's in Nicaragua and Panama that brought forced labor and slavery to the indigenous population.

Long before the US became the global bully, it was the Western Hemisphere's neighborhood thug. The 1898 Spanish American War born of the false flag sinking of the USS Maine facilitated colonial expansion and occupation of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines. Genocide-war casualty expert RJ Rummel estimates [up to near half a million Filipinos died](#) in the bloodbath when the US military invaded, conquered and re-colonized the freshly independent nation of the Philippines during the Spanish American War.

As the US ascended to global power throughout the course of the following century, it became increasingly intolerant toward other nations' autonomy or any and all regional claims of a "Monroe Doctrine" of their own. Having fought its own colonial wars far beyond its own hemisphere, the United States increasingly engaged in tampering with other countries' internal affairs, regularly resorting to assassination of foreign leaders and inciting coups as it so chose around the world. And true to its New World Doctrine, the US maintained tightest control over the hapless nations of Central America and the Caribbean.

As examples of various "Monroe interventions," [a brief history](#) follows. In 1903 for global trading purposes the US wanted a canal, so it invaded Panama, snatching up its land to construct and hold the Panama Canal from its 1914 opening up until 1999. Over this last century countless US Marine invasions took place in Central American nations like Panama and Nicaragua. Cuba and Haiti in the Caribbean were also constantly victimized with military aggression and regime changes, in Haiti right up to the present. US backed coups of democratically elected leaders during the last half century alone occurred in 1964 Brazil, 1965 Dominican Republic, 1973 Chile (ushering in brutal dictator Pinochet), 1973 Uruguay, 1980 El Salvador (that brought Reagan's death squads also to Nicaragua), a CIA linked plane crash in 1981 killing Panama's leader, and more coups and invasions in 1982 and again 1983 in Guatemala and 1989 Panama. And then there are the incessant economic sanctions and embargos used against smaller nations like Cuba and Nicaragua that resist US oppression. Over the years thousands of Latin Americans died in the name of America's "manifest destiny."

By the end of the twentieth century when the US anointed itself as the only global

superpower on the planet, American Empire powerbrokers began their ambitious campaign of world domination against its defeated cold war enemies still deemed its strongest potential threats. Thus the plan was launched to systematically isolate Russia and China from the rest of the world by implanting hostile puppet governments in every nation that borders them, with the ultimate aim of placing missiles aimed at Russia, completely usurping all other nations' regional rights by expanding the Monroe Doctrine well beyond America's own hemisphere but to the entire globe.

Once the Soviet Empire was broken up in the early 1990's, at this point no other country could dare make similar claim of exercising any regional power over its neighbors anywhere in the world except the mighty US Empire that self-justified its longtime double standard hypocrisy always with its grandiose sense of empowered [exceptionalism](#). This notion of exclusive impunity that the US is simply immune from compliance with any and all international laws and treaties including all Geneva Convention or United Nations Charter rules just because it happens to be the most powerful nation on earth meant that as the global village bully it can at will threaten, impose, dictate, control and even destroy all other nations through unchallenged global hegemony.

And so goes the US foreign policy enraptured by its own regime change madness to makeover any nation it so chooses using the worn out lie of spreading democracy when it really spread its own selfish agenda of destabilizing, plundering and enslaving in insurmountable debt every nation and people possessing precious dwindling resources or geopolitical chessboard significance to the US Empire as the self-serving master of the world. Without as much as declaring war, the United States in recent years has constantly violated international laws and committed countless war crimes invading, occupying for decades at a time, raping and destroying nations like Afghanistan, Iraq (several times over), Libya, and Syria (of course with a little proxy help from its secretly [created and funded "terrorist" mercenary monster allies al Qaeda/ISIS](#)), never failing to leave demolished failed states in its wake.

Then just over a year ago the neocon megalomaniacs assaulted another autonomous nation, investing \$5 billion to subversively overthrow another democratically elected president in Ukraine. Then when a vast majority of ethnic Russians living in Crimea that for centuries were always part of Russia voted overwhelmingly to once again become annexed, and President Putin moved to protect both the citizens of Crimea as well as defend his strategically located Russian naval base in Sebastopol, Crimea, suddenly the world bully American Empire began its next [propaganda war in futile attempts to demonize Putin](#) with nonstop lies and false flags behind a thinly veiled design to manipulate the Russian leader into reacting, thus serving as provocation for the US-NATO forces as the clear aggressor to invade and occupy yet another country in yet another war.

But this time what could easily turn into World War III would be against a nuclear powered enemy and would risk the end of all life on planet earth. Yet these suicidal gestures of an evil Empire in freefall decline both morally and economically are being puppeteered by Western oligarchs in the midst of [losing power and control to the emerging power of the East](#). For many centuries the [central banking](#) cabal has used war to drive both its power and profit.

On April 7, by the overwhelming [House vote of 348-48](#), Congress moved forward with the Obama plan to provide heavy armaments to the corrupt de facto Ukrainian government despite Putin's warnings and Europe's ongoing efforts to resolve the conflict through

peaceful negotiations. The vast majority of treasonous American leaders controlling [the US crime syndicate government](#) possess absolutely no regard for humanity, truth or justice and apparently are determined to plunge the planet headlong into catastrophic world war. A year ago researchers concluded the US government no longer represents the interests of American citizens but instead those of the Western oligarchs, the 1% of the world's richest population of ruling elitists that as of next year will own [more wealth than the rest of us 99%](#) of the 7.2 billion earth inhabitants combined. Something's demonically wrong and obscene with that NWO equation.

Yet with all this doom and gloom so rapidly unfolding and accelerating during these first few months of 2015, there remains but one populated continent on this earth that appears relatively free of US military domination and control. That laudable distinction belongs exclusively to nations in the US Empire's own south facing backyard within the Western Hemisphere - South America. Suffering centuries of abuse and exploitation as Empire's so called banana republics, despite their [economic challenges](#) that remain to this day, Latin American nations are emerging as a formidable political force endowed with natural resources and an empowering, growing independence and defiance toward the global giant to the north.

Emboldened by the largest oil reserves on the planet, this century has witnessed the charismatic leadership of the [late Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez](#) (until his death a couple years ago) leading the continental rebellion against the United States, calling [Bush the "devil"](#) before the UN, while calling upon South America to develop its own self-protective line of defense - a walled off independence, unity and solidarity away from the aggressive, controlling and destructive US Empire's global dominance.

Hugo Chavez led the way for fourteen years shunning Washington's claws bent on tapping into his nation's vast oil reserves. But Chavez used his nationalized oil company to provide important revenue to uplift Venezuelans' standard of living with improved educational opportunity, increased hospitals, affordable housing and transportation infrastructure. Any time a [smaller nation in the world rejects US Empire](#) and its predatory system of exploitation of the nation's people and its land resources through privatized, greed-driven transnational corporations, through lies and propaganda that nation is invariably declared a US enemy. In other words, if a leader does what is best for his or her nation's residents producing economic growth and prosperity for its own population, that nation is automatically targeted for "regime change" attack economically, politically and often even militarily by the US Empire. Viewed as a revolutionary champion of the people from humble roots much like his own constituents, and willing to boldly challenge and successfully outmaneuver blatant failed US attempts to overthrow him from power and [temporarily did in 2002](#) and failed in more attempts later, Hugo Chavez overcame the Empire wrath and regional conflict with bordering Colombia and ultimately embraced continental Latin unity as an emerging defense against US imperialism.

The pivotal turning point came in August 2010 when enough pressure was brought to bear on Colombia by Chavez and other neighboring countries after Colombia's president Alvaro Uribe signed an agreement the year before to allow [eight more US military bases](#). The nixed plan was ostensibly to fight the same cocaine smuggling trade the US government makes billions in profits from as well as defeat the leftist insurgent rebels operating inside Colombia. Ultimately the Colombian courts wisely decided the bases were "unconstitutional" because they were never approved of by the nation's legislators. It was simply a deal that

the corrupt outgoing Colombian president had acquiesced to after American Empire pressured for a stronger military foothold on the continent. Though no new bases or additional US soldiers and contractors would be coming to Colombia, 1400 US personnel that were already part of a previously ratified agreement stationed at existing bases were allowed to stay. As a result of the Colombian court decision, the US was successfully banished from making any further inroads of a US military presence inside South America.

This Colombian decision came just a year after Ecuador [gave the boot to the US Air Force](#) occupying an air base sharing the runway of Manta's city airport. The US base designed to be the primary South American "drug interdiction" watchtower from the sky was formally closed in 2009 after the United States had invested \$71 million in airport renovation and over the last decade in operation had brought an annual revenue to the city of \$6.5 million.

But the city of Manta moved onto bigger and better investments than the US Empire could offer with its thinly disguised imperialistic hegemony. Instead Ecuador went ahead with joint business ventures in partnership with both neighboring Venezuela and Hong Kong. Chavez made a sweet deal with Ecuadoran president Rafael Correa to construct a [\\$6 billion oil refinery](#) on the outskirts of Manta. Meanwhile, a Hong Kong firm secured a deal to finance and construct over a half billion dollar deepest water port on the Pacific coast of South America that geographically lies closest to Asia. Instead of giving the same [half bill over to the fake enemy terrorists](#) ISIS in Yemen like stupid Empire does resulting in a far more dangerously destructive world, China smartly invested the same amount of money into our same hemisphere's nations but in renewable and sustainable infrastructure that offers win-win outcomes to both Asia and South America. In contrast, the US foreign policy for too long has always self-servingly invested in militarization and privatization that only benefits a small ruling elite rather than nations and whole populations. What goes around, comes around.

Ecuador's security minister [Gustavo Larrea](#) framed it a little more diplomatically:

The U.S. stopped being the benchmark of what is good for Latin America. Because Latin America did everything that the US asked it to do and wasn't able to get out of poverty, the North American myth lost political weight.

Latin American countries have long realized that the drug cartels work hand in hand with US government agencies to export their illegal drugs into North America. The [US government's criminal enterprise](#) is partnered by the central banking cabal for safe money laundering. Just this week American Drug Enforcement Agency personnel got busted [partying with drug cartel money](#).

The corrupt political system profiting from the international drug trade has not been more apparent than in Central American nations where local criminal cartels' and Washington's criminal interests appear one and the same. Honduras readily comes to mind as the worst Central American victim of another covert US-induced [coup in June 2009](#) when another democratically elected leader closely associated with Chavez, President Manuel Zelaya, was ousted because as a rancher he attempted to improve the lives of his indigenous agrarian poor class.

Honduras was targeted for regime change as Obama and his Secretary of State Hilary Clinton's strategy to [roll back democratic gains](#) made in various countries during the Bush

years. After training virtually the entire Honduran officer corps, the US planted a murderous military junta into power that's been brutalizing Hondurans as the [murder capital of the world](#) ever since while partnering with the local drug cartels, their criminal gangs and agents of the US government moving drugs from South America into Mexico and North America. The [50,000 children](#) largely from Honduras and El Salvador who showed up at the US border last year was but one among many tragic outcomes of the morally reprehensible US policy.

When Chavez died two years ago, the US realized that his successor Nicolas Maduro was far more vulnerable as the US has repeatedly attempted to undermine his power and position with its fanatical regime change agenda. While Ukraine was deposed of its president a year ago last February, CIA and State Department NGO's were hard at work in Venezuela drumming up Maduro opposition culminating in violent street protests not unlike those in Kiev. Like clockwork a year later, Washington attempted yet another coup but once again failed on Valentine's Day this year. Obama recently hypocritically [declared Venezuela a threat to US national security](#), with more outright lies as he reacts with sour grapes to his recent botched coup effort and his jailed coup co-conspirators, attempting to scare weak links in both the Venezuelan government as well as all the Latin American governments assessing if he can lure any defectors away from their unified continental anti-Empire stance.

Leaders from Brazil, Bolivia, Argentina and Ecuador immediately responded to Obama's verbal attack on Venezuela, verbalizing strong condemnation against his overt threats. If anything, the US president's harsh words that have no real consequence (other than certain Venezuelan families cannot enter the United States) are in effect motivating South American nations to rally around Maduro and strengthening their alliances and mutual support against their common threat (not unlike Russia and China has been forced to do in response to the US Empire renewing its cold war enemies).

Meanwhile, the designated military structure for US presence in Latin America and the Caribbean - the US South Command - is hollow and more in name only as it hardly has anything to command these days because almost no US military outposts are located in the Western Hemisphere south of the United States. Very nearly to a country, every government has either kicked out the US military or has consistently refused to let the Empire wolf back in. One too many invasions from the past have come to haunt the rejected US Empire today. In fact, these days more often a visible Russian military presence is occasionally observed on Latin soil or sailing in southern waters or docked in South American ports than any US military deployments.

Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov last April visited Chile, Cuba, Nicaragua and Peru. Additionally, Russian defense minister [Sergei Shoigu](#) even went further, stressing the importance that Russian military forces should be assigned to foreign military bases, without naming exactly where. It was likely more a public relations ploy to excite the US national security neocons since clearly the Empire forces are being shunned while Latin America courts favor with the Russians. South American nations are unlikely to invite another foreign power to any permanent military bases since they collectively are emerging as an autonomous and independent political force unto themselves, and injecting Russia or the United States military into that mix would be both disruptive and counterproductive.

In Central America only Honduras has US military personnel stationed at [Soto Cano Air Base](#) listed to provide medical support to Hondurans as well as disaster relief. Another base located in El Salvador is Comalapa Naval Base opened in 2000 after the 1999 US departure

from Panama. Comalapa employs just 25 US military and 40 civilian personnel (according to its website). Its mission is primarily narco-surveillance. Two more small anti-drug monitoring stations are located in the Caribbean Dutch territories on the islands of Curacao and Aruba. An air station on the island of Antigua is in the process of relocating to Western Australia. The radar station is moving to the Pacific to mainly monitor China's growing military satellite activity in that part of the globe. Finally a secret black ops station in the Bahamas called "Area 51 of the Caribbean" is said to develop new naval military technology.

But outside these small scale outposts according to the Pentagon, no other active military bases are occupied by US armed forces. South Command commander [General John F Kelly](#) maintains that there is little current need for deployment of US troops in southern nations of the Western Hemisphere. His commander-in-chief notwithstanding, the general believes that no major security issues or serious threats in Latin America warrant a greater US military presence since numerous global hotspots that do require American military forces obviously take priority. Additionally, recent fiscal budget cuts factored in are also given to explain the near complete lack of US military presence in Central and South America. But then these "official reasons" sound more like a face-saving rationale rather than admitting the truth that the dominant mindset of Latin Americans who at one time chanted in protest "Yankee go home!" are now in unison and solidarity chanting even louder "Yankee stay home!"

What does unfortunately remain open as the Caribbean blight on the US Empire is an old US naval base operating since 1903 - Cuba's Guantanamo Bay. It's the Western Hemispheric mecca for housing illegal, unaccounted for US torture, false, unjustified imprisonment and grossest inhumanity still going on daily today since 2002. Though Obama has continued for seven years feebly promising and vowing to close it, the puppet president has yet to keep his word. Last week a teenager asked the president what he would like to change from the first day he was elected and Obama answered, ["I think I would have closed Guantanamo on the first day."](#) That lame response failed to bolster his nonexistent credibility. After all, he also promised to be the "most open and transparent president in US history." The man ad nauseam throughout his regime has only proven he cannot be trusted. But then neither can 99% of the United States leaders in government or the military.

It's a bit of irony that the global superpower killing machine occupies over 1000 military posts throughout every corner of the globe except one, the one sitting in its south-side backdoor no less - Latin America. All those past military interventions, coups and tyrannical violence and injustice toward Latin America have soured relations now. The up and coming nations south of our border were brutally beaten down for more than a century by the US and now that they are rising in power with friendlier ties to cold war enemies Russia and China, once again karma's come home to roost, biting the big evil Empire squarely in its imperial ass.

Joachim Hagopian is a West Point graduate and former US Army officer. He has written a manuscript based on his unique military experience entitled ["Don't Let The Bastards Getcha Down."](#) It examines and focuses on US international relations, leadership and national security issues. After the military, Joachim earned a master's degree in Clinical Psychology and worked as a licensed therapist in the mental health field for more than a quarter century. He now concentrates on his writing and has a blog site at <http://empireexposed.blogspot.com/>.

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