



Obama Expands U.S. Military Role in Latin America, Again

Under the guise of fighting a more vigorous “war on drugs,” the Obama administration will continue adding to the exploding government deficit by expanding the already widespread and extremely costly U.S. military presence throughout Latin America. Critics in the United States and all across the Western hemisphere, however, have slammed the controversial scheme’s growth from all angles.



According to an investigative [report published February 3 by the Associated Press](#), the federal government’s controversial “war” in Latin America is ballooning at unprecedented rates. Consider, for example, the record \$3 billion in military equipment transfers to governments in the region authorized by Obama in 2011 — a quadrupling of the figures from just a decade ago. Almost 90 percent of the nearly \$1 billion in aid for military and law enforcement in Latin America was spent on the “drug war,” the AP reported.

Several thousand U.S. troops are deployed in the region at any given time, and as *The New American* [reported](#) last year, Obama just sent hundreds of Marines to Guatemala to fight the “drug war” after the anti-communist president there [called for total legalization](#). According to the AP, U.S. government pilots flying drug missions for at least 10 separate federal law-enforcement agencies clocked almost 50,000 hours on drug missions in Latin America.

Meanwhile, American troops are training dubious military forces all over the region — all over the world, actually — to help wage the controversial war. The U.S. government also uses its own resources, such as satellites and “intelligence” capabilities, to help questionable Latin American regimes crack down on certain drug cartels even as [others receive official assistance in the form of protection and arms](#).

If Obama gets his way, despite federal deficits topping \$1 trillion annually and Latin American leaders increasingly [calling for new strategies such as legalization](#), the expensive “drug war” militarization trend is expected to continue exploding. Congress, meanwhile, aside from the occasional mild criticism from members on either side of the aisle, seems more than willing to go along with the president’s controversial plans.

Unsurprisingly, drug warriors and others whose taxpayer-funded jobs depend on the continual expansion of the U.S. government’s [United Nations-mandated “war”](#) celebrated Obama’s surge in spending. Critics in America and throughout the hemisphere, however, [blasted](#) the scheme, warning about the deadly consequences paid by innocent victims, the arming of hostile regimes notorious for human rights abuses, the staggering cost that American taxpayers can no longer afford, and much more.

Among the most serious complaints expressed by opponents of Obama’s increasingly massive and militarized war are the [well-documented](#) suspicions of U.S. government [intimate involvement](#) in the drug trade. [Top American officials](#), not to mention leaders from all over Latin America and even drug cartel bosses, have alleged that the [Central Intelligence Agency and other U.S. government entities are](#)



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[deeply tied to the narcotics trade.](#)

The *New American* has [documented](#) these ties repeatedly in recent years — everyone from former [Drug Enforcement Administration chiefs](#) and [U.S. lawmakers](#) to [Latin American presidents](#) and [top drug cartel bosses](#) have [accused](#) Washington, D.C., of [complicity in the narcotics trade](#). The recent “[Fast and Furious](#)” scandal, which exposed the Obama administration lawlessly arming certain Mexican drug cartels, has only added fuel to the fire. The *New York Times* even exposed the DEA laundering tens of billions of dollars in drug profits, but [when Congress tried to investigate, the administration stonewalled](#).

Other critics point to the fact that the federal government is [not authorized by the Constitution to wage a drug war in the first place](#), even domestically, let alone all over the world. The U.S. government, of course, has a few constitutionally enumerated powers granted to it by the states and the people that created it. Outside of those specifically delegated authorities, as the Tenth Amendment and the Founding Fathers’ writings make clear, the federal government has no lawful power to act — that is why alcohol prohibition, for instance, required a constitutional amendment.

Then there is the giant problem that much of the unconstitutional drug war “aid” goes to corrupt regimes — governments ruled by criminals who are often hostile to the United States. Indeed, some two thirds of Latin American governments are [now controlled by a coalition of socialist and communist forces known as the Foro de São Paulo](#) (São Paulo Forum, or FSP), which was founded by Cuban despot Fidel Castro, former Brazilian President Luiz Inacio “Lula” da Silva, the Sandinistas, and even some Marxist narco-terrorist groups.

Communist Cuba’s Raul Castro [just assumed the presidency](#) of the “Community of Latin American and Caribbean States” (CELAC), a [Communist Chinese-backed transnational entity that includes every national government and dictatorship in the hemisphere](#) except the United States and Canada. Establishment publications such as the *Economist* heralded Castro as the new “leader” of Latin America. It is also well known that the FSP and its members have [received significant financial support from groups such as the FARC](#), a Marxist terror group that reaps huge profits from cocaine thanks to prohibition.

Still, tens of billions of U.S. taxpayer dollars have already been spent on drug efforts in Latin America over the last decade — arming and training various dubious regimes in the region, spraying poison on farmers’ fields, sending [out-of-control federal agents](#) throughout the region, and more — [often with tragic results](#). The flow of illegal drugs across the [intentionally porous U.S. border](#) and the body count of innocent victims, however, have only continued to grow in tandem.

Rep. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.), who chaired the U.S. House Western Hemisphere Subcommittee throughout Obama’s first term in office, told the AP that the U.S. government-sponsored “crackdown” on certain Mexican cartels only left them “stronger and more violent.” Mexicans, of course, know those facts all too well — especially considering the well over 70,000 civilians who have been killed over the last five years amid [Obama’s ramped-up “war” in that nation](#).

“Billions upon billions of U.S. taxpayer dollars have been spent over the years to combat the drug trade in Latin America and the Caribbean,” Rep. Eliot Engel explained, adding that he planned to introduce a proposal to create a “Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Commission” to review the controversial schemes. “In spite of our efforts, the positive results are few and far between.”

Obama administration officials cited by the AP, however, defended the strategy and vowed to expand it.



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“It is unfortunate that militaries have to be involved in what are essentially law enforcement engagements,” noted outgoing Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Western Hemisphere Affairs Frank Mora. “We are not going to turn our backs on these governments or these institutions because they’ve found themselves in such a situation that they have to use their militaries in this way.”

Despite the fact that the U.S. government is no closer to “winning” its [UN-mandated](#) unconstitutional “war” on drugs than it was when the scheme began about a trillion dollars ago, the AP noted that there are no plans to reconsider the failed strategy. In fact, it will only expand, officials explained, with American taxpayers apparently expected to believe that more of the same will somehow bring about different results.

“It’s not for me to say if it’s the correct strategy. It’s the strategy we are using,” said the Defense Department’s Latin America narcotics boss Brick Scoggins, adding that the U.S. government’s expensive war is expected to keep growing in the region over the next five years — especially in Central America. “I don’t know what the alternative is.”

Numerous Latin American leaders from across the political spectrum [have suggested full legalization](#) as an alternative in recent years, saying it would put the cartels out of business and end the horrific violence associated with prohibition. Obama, though, [promptly dispatched high-level functionaries](#) throughout the region to put an end to those discussions using threats and taxpayer-funded bribes.

Critics say another alternative might be to simply follow the U.S. Constitution, which all officials, from Obama on down, took an oath to uphold and defend. That would mean an end to the federal drug war, however, as well as an end to the gravy train of taxpayer money that drug warriors, foreign regimes, and government “contractors” have come to rely upon.

So, at least until Uncle Sam’s creditors decide to finally stop loaning money to Obama, analysts expect that the administration’s global drug war will [almost certainly keep expanding](#). The price, meanwhile, aside from the costs shouldered by American taxpayers, will continue to be paid largely in the blood of innocent Latin Americans.

Photo of sailor aboard USS Underwood patrolling of the coast of Panama as part of the war on drugs: AP Images

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