



## U.S. Military Expands in Latin America

Following a cooperation deal with Colombia last year, the United States military this week announced plans to further expand its influence throughout Latin America, using agreements with various governments including Brazil and Peru.

On April 12, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Brazilian Defense Minister Nelson Jobim signed an “umbrella” accord that will “lead to a deepening of U.S.-Brazil defense cooperation at all levels,” according to Gates. The agreement includes provisions for “military exchanges,” logistic support, training, cooperation on defense-related products and services, and more. It is the first such agreement since the late 1970s.



Gates arrived in the capital of Peru the next day, where he met with the Peruvian President and various defense officials. He offered more U.S. assistance in military affairs as well as “human rights training” to help boost the South American country’s image. “Our two nations are deepening an already-robust military partnership, and we discussed expanding this relationship through bilateral and multilateral initiatives,” Gates said.

Next on the defense boss’ Latin American tour was a stop in Colombia, widely considered the staunchest “U.S. ally” in the region. Gates praised outgoing Colombian President Alvaro Uribe and offered support to his successor. That nation’s government has already received billions of dollars from American taxpayers, much of which was spent wiping out rivals of a leftist narco-trafficking guerilla group known as the FARC. In October of last year, the American and Colombian regimes sparked a wave of fury throughout the region when they signed an [agreement](#) to allow U.S. troops to use seven military bases there.

“The purpose of my trip here in South America is a positive purpose, and it is to strengthen our friendship and our military-to-military cooperation with Peru and Colombia. These arrangements between ourselves and Brazil, ourselves and Peru, ourselves and Colombia, are about these countries, not about anybody else,” Gates claimed, possibly referencing elevated tensions with Venezuela. “They face similar types of problems with insurgents and narcotics and crime, so figuring out how we can further help them in their own efforts and also in their co-operation with each other is an important opportunity.”

Some [news](#) reports claimed Gates was working on installing military bases in Peru and Brazil to help “contain” Venezuela’s socialist “President” Hugo Chavez, but officials insisted there were no discussions about new bases. Analysts suggested that the visit had more to do with countering growing Russian, Chinese, and Iranian influence in the region. Russian Prime Minister and former KGB operative Vladimir Putin was in Venezuela last week to sign over 30 agreements, including deepening military, nuclear, and oil cooperation.



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on April 15, 2010

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Gates will wrap up his trip to Latin America with a visit to Caribbean leaders on Friday, where he is expected to discuss closer military cooperation, anti-drug efforts, and other “mutual” problems. Another topic on the agenda is how the U.S. military can bolster efforts by the “Regional Security System” to counter various threats.

But despite all of the posturing, the premises of Gates’ whole visit are flawed. The idea that the Brazilian government would help “U.S. interests” in the region is patently absurd, especially considering the fact that Brazilian President Luiz Inacio da Silva is a radical leftist who recently boasted of helping get Venezuelan tyrant Hugo Chavez elected. Not to mention the fact that every country on the continent is a member of the [South American Defense Council](#), a military cooperation pact that forms part of a broader “regional integration” effort.

Securing the Brazilian government’s cooperation on battling the drug trade is also preposterous: Brazilian President “Lula” is one of the founders (along with Fidel Castro and the Sandinistas) of the leftist “Foro de São Paulo” (São Paulo Forum), a powerful alliance of governments, political parties, “social movements,” and — yes — terrorists and drug traffickers, including the FARC and others.

“American political analysts are always getting it all backwards: They are alarmed at Venezuela and do not understand that the headquarters of the revolution is in Brazil,” acclaimed Brazilian author and philosopher Professor Olavo de Carvalho told [The New American](#). “The Department of State is well informed about the São Paulo forum and its Brazilian leadership. When it supports Lula under the pretext that he is “a moderate,” in contrast with the “radical” Hugo Chavez, it is actually camouflaging the real danger so that it may grow sheltered from the sight of any intruder.”

The U.S. regime should quit unconstitutionally squandering Americans’ wealth and meddling in the affairs of foreign nations, as the Founding Fathers advised. Not only does it provide a boogeyman and scapegoat for despots like Chavez and Castro, it almost always come back to haunt the nation. Plus, how is it even remotely in American interests to help a government known to be assisting the spread of [socialist revolution](#) throughout the region?

The unconstitutional federal “War on Drugs” is also only serving to enrich dictators and fund terrorism, while a never-ending supply continues to pour in through the virtually wide-open Southern border. A constitutional foreign policy would do infinitely more to protect Americans and true U.S. interests around the world. Defense Secretary Gates should be in the United States figuring out how to end the current unconstitutional wars and get America’s brave soldiers home safely and promptly, not traveling the world working on starting new conflicts.

Photo of Robert Gates (right) and Nelson Jobim: AP Images



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