



Written by [Paul Dragu](#) on September 22, 2025

Venezuela Fortifies Russian Ties to Ward Off U.S. Interference

As the United States blows Venezuelan boats out of the water, the Nicolás Maduro regime is jumping into the open arms of the Russians.

A new working agreement between the two nations includes a vow by the Russians to support Maduro against outside regime-change plots. Russian media [reported](#) on Friday that the agreement “aims to take cooperation to a new level, focusing on resistance to sanctions, multilateralism and defense of sovereignty against foreign interference.”



Viacheslav Chernobrovin/iStock/Getty Images Plus

Venezuela’s National Assembly is set to approve the agreement, which will strengthen the communist nation’s already-existing relationship with the Kremlin. [According](#) to Spanish daily paper *El País*, the Law Approving the Strategic Association and Cooperation Treaty “establishes a legal instrument that would expand the scope for political and economic cooperation with Russia.”

Countering Trump

This recent development is widely seen as a way to counter U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration, which has been turning the screws on the Maduro regime in the name of halting fentanyl and cocaine trafficking into the U.S. homeland. Trump has so far ordered strikes on three boats that started out from Venezuela.

The strikes have prompted scrutiny and skepticism from U.S. legislators, including Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), who believes the president violated long-standing Coast Guard rules of engagement with his lethal actions. Paul also expressed skepticism that the boat was carrying drugs or even heading toward the U.S. “How is a boat with four outboard engines going to go 2,700 miles across the ocean?” he asked. You can read more about Paul’s opposition in our previous reporting [here](#).

The White House recently put a \$50 million bounty on Maduro’s head. This is more than triple the \$15 million reward the first Trump administration issued. In 2020, the Southern District of New York filed a stack of federal charges against Maduro related to drug-trafficking accusations, “including narco-terrorism, conspiracy to import cocaine, possession of machine guns and destructive devices, and conspiracy to possess machine guns and destructive devices,” [according](#) to reports. Attorney General Pam Bondi said in a video posted on X earlier this month that “Maduro uses foreign terrorist organizations like [Tren de Aragua], Sinaloa and Cartel of the Suns to bring deadly drugs and violence into our country.” She added the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) so far has seized 30 tons of cocaine linked to Maduro. For what it’s worth, the Maduro government denies ties to either Cartel of the Suns or Tren de Aragua.

Also making Maduro nervous is the swelling of the American military presence in the Caribbean, part of



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the supposed effort to halt Venezuela's shipping of drugs and gang members into the homeland. The Department of Defense has positioned warships there with 4,000 troops.

Regime Change?

Maduro, however, believes the Trump administration is not so much after drugs as it is after him. He believes the administration's true goal is regime change.

And [according](#) to *El País*, the Maduro regime is beating its chest in an attempt to make itself seem bigger and scarier:

Venezuela sought to display its firepower on Thursday. The Bolivarian Military Aviation released images of Russian-made fighter jets, Sukhoi Su-30s, equipped with anti-ship missiles. In Instagram footage, the jets are lined up on a runway before taking off. Meanwhile, 2,500 elite personnel from the Bolivarian National Armed Forces, along with a significant portion of the Venezuelan Navy's military equipment, have been deployed to the island of La Orchila in the Venezuelan Caribbean. There, a series of three-day military exercises will be conducted at a heightened state of alert, reportedly simulating hostile scenarios at sea.

Maduro is also working to fortify his stranglehold on power. For instance, he created the National Council for Sovereignty and Peace, defined by *El País* as

a forum composed of Chavista [loyal to Maduro] and independent (but still Chavista-aligned) civil actors, businesspeople linked to the regime, private and public universities, labor unions, and opposition politicians tolerated by the government, in which a renewed call was made to pursue peace and defend the country's integrity.

A powerful Chavista leader, Diosdado Cabello, has issued warnings to any opposition forces within the country, stating:

The internal enemies of the homeland, the Trojan horses, must know that they will be treated as such in a scenario of foreign aggression.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has warned Maduro's government gangsters that attacking opposition leader María Corina Machado would trigger fatal consequences, according to reports.

Maduro's regime is vulnerable. His country has become a punchline for failed Marxist policies. Years of inept and corrupt governing have squandered the nation's resources. And last year, he had to crack down on protesters who refused to be silent in the face of his illegitimate election back to power.

But while he's no paragon of fairness, justice, civil liberties, or even competence, Maduro's regime-change allegations align with decades of precedence. The U.S. carried out a litany of such operations in Latin America during the 20th century, all part of America's battle with the East for influence over Latin America. You can read more about that in our previous reporting [here](#).



Russian-Venezuelan Cooperation

It's in this context that Venezuela is getting cozier with Russia, which appears to be at the center of every emerging alliance antagonistic to U.S.-Western hegemony. Early this month, Russian head of state Vladimir Putin was front and center at the 25th annual Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit held in Tianjin, China. The [meeting's](#) foundational topic was curbing U.S. dominance around the world. The Russians, like the Chinese and Indians, claim to be working toward a multipolar world, one in which no one nation is as dominant as the U.S. has been for the last three decades. But is this their true intent? Or is it the creation of a world order according to their vision?

As for the new agreement, Russian state-controlled news outlet Sputnik [reported](#) Friday that it will boost cooperation on energy, space and technology, infrastructure, industry, diplomacy, and military matters.

The Russians say they'll help modernize Venezuela's power grid, as well as its rail system and infrastructure in general. They want to help Venezuela better absorb Western oil sanctions and upgrade its dismal economy. Sputnik reported:

The agreement promises to considerably enhance joint venture opportunities and provides for the simplification of Eurasian Economic Union protocols on customs duties, reducing tariffs on Venezuelan goods by 25% to facilitate trade. The two countries are also looking to expand acceptance of the MIR payment system [Russia's national card-payment system] in Venezuela. Caracas is eager to join [BRICS+](#). Russia has reaffirmed its support for its membership.

As for diplomatic ramifications, "Russia and Venezuela have each other's backs at the UN, resisting Western pressure and building a multipolar world," Russian media reports. "Russia has vowed to back Venezuela against US 'regime change' plots."

Overall, Russian media frames the new agreement as crucial to "assisting the Bolivarian Republic's decades-long campaign to resist US imperialism."



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