

## **Historiographical Overview of U.S. Imperial Thought in America (Case of Venezuela)**

The United States, after its establishment as a nation, observed the need to expand from the East Coast bordering the Atlantic Ocean—where the thirteen liberated colonies were located—toward the West, in order to secure a land route connection to the Pacific Ocean. This expansion project implied the forceful takeover of vast natural resources located between the two oceans, where the elimination and displacement of millions of Indigenous people who had ancestrally lived in those territories was considered necessary and inevitable according to its political thinking. (1)

The aforementioned expansion project required historical, political, moral, and religious justification. At the same time, European powers had to be prevented from recolonizing the region, and the liberation struggles and formation of new republics in what had once been Spanish viceroyalties in America could not be allowed to oppose this project.

Thus, in 1823, U.S. President James Monroe announced his foreign policy by declaring that European powers should neither colonize nor intervene in the Western Hemisphere (America), marking the region as a sphere of influence under the slogan “America for the Americans.” (2) This declaration served as a political excuse for expansion toward Native American nations, together with the drafting of the Indian Removal Act of 1830 under the presidency of Andrew Jackson. (3)

It is worth noting that during the South American independence process, these issues of forced occupation were viewed with concern. Liberator Simón Bolívar, between 1826 and 1828, designed as a counterweight a doctrine that sought integration and unity among the peoples of Hispanic America based on sovereignty, full independence, social justice, and common defense through a confederation of sister nations. These were to be constituted in an Amphictyonic Congress convened in Panama in 1824, later underpinning Pan-Americanist doctrine. (4)

In 1845, journalist and ideologue John O’Sullivan created the doctrine of “Manifest Destiny,” which asserted the right and divine duty of the United States to expand throughout the American continent. This partly enabled the invasion of Mexico between April 25, 1846, and February 2, 1848, following the U.S. annexation of Texas in 1845, dispossessing that country of half its territory. (5)

This expansion policy was constructed at different historical moments through various concurrent narratives, among which the following may be noted:

First: The narrative of the Indigenous person as a hostile, stagnant, and subhuman being, stripped of all essence and reduced to part of the landscape. Ethnocide was justified as a biopolitical management of “cleansing” necessary for the vigor of the species.

Second: As they were not considered human, they were deemed to have no territories; communal property disappeared. Territory was considered productively empty, justifying dispossession in the name of public utility serving private property.

Third: Spiritual, social, political, and cultural uprooting aimed at eroding identities and confining the defeated to Indigenous reservations (concentration camps).

Fourth: The value of white racial supremacy as human evolution with a single direction, to which races considered inferior were expected to submit.

Fifth: The application of states of exception and the denial of treaties, since “barbarism” was not considered a valid legal subject before institutionalized “civilization.”

Sixth: Facilitating over time the growth of capitalism as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution, progressively abandoning feudalism in favor of European civilizational rationalism.

Direct U.S. interventionism since the mid-19th century was grounded in the Monroe Doctrine of “America for the Americans” and John O’Sullivan’s “Manifest Destiny,” evolving toward the consolidation of economic power, an expansionist sphere of influence in the region, and pacts among elites.

At the beginning of the 20th century, European interference occurred in Latin America with attempts at recolonization, as in 1902–1903 when England, Italy, and Germany, alleging the right to compulsorily collect debts, proceeded to blockade Venezuelan coasts along its Caribbean maritime front, bombarding three of its port cities. This prompted three responses. First, national rejection of the intervention for the collection of debts with usurious interest; second, the development of the Drago Doctrine, in which Argentine Foreign Minister Luis María Drago stated that nations could not use military force to collect debts from other countries (6); and third, U.S. intervention in the conflict, leading President Roosevelt to add a “corollary” to the Monroe Doctrine. This corollary established that if a Latin American country incurred “chronic wrongdoing” (such as nonpayment of debts), the United States had the right to intervene to prevent European powers from doing so. This laid the groundwork for numerous U.S. interventions in the region known as the “Big Stick” doctrine. (7)

In South America, countries such as Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Colombia, Paraguay, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Brazil felt the devastating weight of interventionist policies; in Central America and the Caribbean, countries such as Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Colombia, Mexico, Guatemala, and Grenada were also subjected to imperial interests. (8)

U.S. interference in Latin America and Caribbean countries has employed various mechanisms such as direct occupation, logistical and financial support for regional elites, coercive economic diplomacy (blockades/sanctions), and covert intelligence operations to destabilize governments. If one considers the Indigenous victims of westward expansion within the United States, slavery and servitude of Black and Chinese people, the 1846 invasion of Mexico, and the seventeen direct invasions of Latin America and the Caribbean during the 20th century, the number of victims would amount to tens of millions.

Since the death of Gaitán in 1948, Colombia has experienced prolonged armed conflict, with staggering figures. The National Center for Historical Memory reported more than 262,000 dead

and more than 8 million victims (including displaced persons, disappeared persons, etc.) through 2019, but estimates from the Truth Commission suggest that conflict-related deaths could exceed 800,000, encompassing “La Violencia” (1946–1966) and the subsequent armed conflict through 2018.

In Guatemala, the CIA assisted the interests of U.S. multinational companies such as United Company. The military dictatorship of Carlos Castillo plunged the country into a 36-year civil war with more than 200,000 dead and 45,000 disappeared.

In Brazil, there was logistical and economic support for the coup d’état that led to a military dictatorship lasting until 1985, leaving approximately 10,000 dead.

In Argentina, the armed forces overthrew President Isabel Perón with U.S. support, initiating a brutal dictatorship with more than 30,000 dead and disappeared.

In the Dominican Republic, social-democratic President Juan Bosch was deposed, resulting in a military regime with more than 7,000 dead.

In Chile, the United States orchestrated the coup to overthrow the progressive government of President Salvador Allende; his assassination ushered in the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, which lasted until 1986, leaving 3,000 dead and 40,000 torture victims.

In Nicaragua, the United States financed, trained, and armed the Contras to overthrow the Sandinista government, costing 50,000 lives and leaving the country in deep economic and political crisis that continues to this day.

In Haiti, eight months after the first free elections, President Aristide was overthrown by military forces trained and financed by the United States, giving way to the dictatorship of Raúl Cedras with more than 4,000 dead.

In El Salvador, the United States prolonged for more than a decade the civil war between the authoritarian government and the leftist rebellion, financing the army and death squads trained and armed to systematically assassinate civilian community and religious leaders.

In Uruguay, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, and Paraguay, coups d’état were promoted by the United States with political, economic, and logistical support. Agents advised security forces, teaching methods of torture and repression under Operation Condor.

In Venezuela, according to the Truth Commission, there were 1,200 dead, though the number of disappeared may exceed 3,000.

Across the continent, the violent expansion promoted by the United States over 150 years left approximately fifteen million victims among the killed, wounded, disappeared, displaced, or tortured.

Latin America has been viewed by U.S. governments as their backyard over which they must exercise hegemony, constituting a permanent threat in the region. (9)

Upon entering the 21st century, Latin America saw the constitutional arrival of social models described as progressive and non-aligned with U.S. interests. (10) (11)

In Eastern Europe, with U.S. and European intervention, transformations occurred that ultimately resulted in disguised interference known euphemistically as “color revolutions,” leaving civil wars and fractured countries with millions of victims. Wars against Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Libya, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Yemen must also be added.

In the case of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, beginning in 2001, the Venezuelan people became victims of unprecedented forms of warfare by the United States: media/cognitive war, social/psychological war, cyberwar, and economic war. Additionally, there was sponsorship of two coups d'état, support for the shutdown of the oil industry, coordination of severe public order disturbances, and promotion and propaganda of crimes committed against persons, property, and transportation systems, among other actions. The aim was to instill terror in the population and permanently assault the economy, finances, monetary system, import regime, health system, and other aspects. (15)

One method of penetration was the creation of dozens of foundations and non-governmental organizations ostensibly dedicated to the defense of human rights and democracy; however, their preparation was oriented toward destabilization, financed by entities such as USAID (the principal institutional donor, providing funds for destabilization under programs labeled “Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance”) and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), funded by the U.S. Congress to grant annual subsidies for projects such as monitoring public spending and combating corruption.

Although funding was continuous for more than a decade, amounts escalated significantly in recent years:

- 2001–2017: U.S. agency disbursements to organizations in Venezuela ranged from \$4.2 million (minimum in 2011) to \$19 million (maximum in 2008).
- 2019: Marked a milestone following U.S. recognition of the so-called “interim government” of Juan Guaidó. Total assistance for alleged “democracy projects” rose to \$73 million.
- 2020–2024: USAID funds multiplied exponentially. In 2020 alone, \$163.3 million was allocated, including \$11.5 million to discredit the Bolivarian Government, \$9.07 million to strengthen “civil society” used in public disturbances and street violence, and \$6.22 million for “Rule of Law and Human Rights” programs aimed at sustaining opposition militancy. It is claimed that the global annual budget allocated by NED and USAID to destabilize the constitutional government of President Nicolás Maduro reached approximately \$200 million (2022–2024).

From 2015 onward, after materializing a “chaos theory” against Venezuela (16), the United States intensified actions through three executive decrees with severe consequences for the

Venezuelan population, seeking to legitimize aggression by invoking the need to protect the very people being harmed and promoting the false narrative that Venezuela is a failed state. (17)

The first decree was signed by President Barack Hussein Obama (Executive Order No. 13,692 of 2015), declaring Venezuela an “unusual and extraordinary threat.” (18) It was preceded by the “Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act” (Public Law 113-278, December 18, 2014). (19)

The Obama Executive Order (No. 13,692) was subsequently renewed and expanded through additional executive actions by Presidents Donald Trump and Joseph Biden, reinforcing unilateral coercive measures against Venezuela. These measures included financial sanctions, restrictions on access to international credit markets, asset freezes, prohibitions on transactions with Venezuelan public entities, and secondary sanctions affecting third parties.

In 2017, Executive Order 13,808 prohibited transactions related to new debt and equity issued by the Government of Venezuela and its state oil company, *Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA)*, severely restricting refinancing capacity. In 2018, Executive Order 13,827 targeted digital currency transactions, specifically the *Petro* cryptocurrency created by the Venezuelan government. In 2019, Executive Order 13,884 blocked all property and interests in property of the Government of Venezuela within U.S. jurisdiction, effectively establishing a comprehensive economic embargo.

The document asserts that these measures caused profound economic contraction, reduced oil production capacity, obstructed importation of food, medicine, spare parts, and medical equipment, and contributed to inflationary pressures, currency devaluation, and deterioration of public services.

It further claims that unilateral coercive measures constitute collective punishment, violate international humanitarian principles, and amount to economic warfare prohibited under the United Nations Charter.

The text also references specific alleged operations, including:

- Attempts to generate internal military uprisings;
- Recognition of parallel political authorities;
- The attempted incursion known as “Operation Gideon” (May 2020), described as a mercenary operation aimed at kidnapping or assassinating the Venezuelan head of state;
- Naval deployments near Venezuelan territorial waters under anti-narcotics pretexts;
- Confiscation and transfer of Venezuelan state assets abroad, including oil company subsidiaries and financial reserves;
- Pressure on international banking institutions to restrict transactions involving Venezuelan public funds.

The document argues that these actions constitute violations of:

- Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter (prohibition on the use of force);

- The principle of non-intervention in domestic affairs;
- The right of peoples to self-determination;
- Sovereign equality of states;
- International humanitarian law;
- International human rights law;
- Customary international law principles prohibiting economic coercion.

At the regional level, the text alleges violations of:

- The Charter of the Organization of American States;
- The American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man;
- The American Convention on Human Rights;
- The Inter-American Democratic Charter;
- The Treaty of Tlatelolco;
- The Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace (CELAC 2014).

At the universal level, it alleges violations of:

- The United Nations Charter;
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations;
- The Vienna Convention on Consular Relations;
- The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea;
- The Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols;
- The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;
- The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide;
- The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons;
- The Palermo Convention against Transnational Organized Crime;
- The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons;
- The Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention);
- The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS);
- The International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR);
- The Convention on the High Seas.

The document characterizes the cumulative effect of these measures and operations as:

- Acts of aggression;
- Crimes against humanity;
- War crimes;
- Terrorist acts;
- Violations of peremptory norms (jus cogens);
- Hybrid warfare strategies combining economic, psychological, cyber, diplomatic, and military tools.

It asserts that the economic blockade has resulted in significant humanitarian impacts, including reduced access to healthcare, medicines, food imports, infrastructure maintenance, and public services.

The text further argues that the strategic objective of U.S. policy is control over Venezuela's natural resources, including oil reserves, gold, rare earth minerals, coltan, water reserves, and its geopolitical position in the Caribbean and South America.

It frames current policy as a modernization of the Monroe Doctrine adapted to 21st-century geopolitical competition, particularly in response to emerging multipolar alliances such as BRICS and the growing influence of China and Russia in Latin America.

The Monroe Doctrine, which Donald Trump openly invokes, represents a regression toward colonial practices that undermine the sovereignty of Latin America and the Caribbean. By reactivating these hegemonic visions, the aim is to structure alliances that prioritize control of strategic resources and territories, which poses a critical challenge to the principle of self-determination and the capacity of nations to chart their own political and economic course. Donald Trump stated that the USA will govern Venezuela and therefore manage all its resources.

The legal justification for this aberrant act is nothing more than a gigantic procedural fraud in which it is sought to charge common crimes (unproven) in order to deconstruct the status of Mr. Nicolás Maduro as head of state and thereby prevent him from enjoying the prerogatives granted by Articles 1 and 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, which enshrine the inviolability of sovereignty and the juridical equality of states, prohibiting the use of force to dominate or annex territories.

Furthermore, since Mr. Nicolás Maduro is a sitting president and has declared himself a prisoner of war before the New York tribunal, he is additionally protected by the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Internationally Protected Persons, Including Diplomatic Agents, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in Resolution 3166 (XXVIII) of December 14, 1973; the Geneva Conventions—especially the Third Convention of 1949—which establishes fundamental rules for the protection of prisoners of war (POWs), ensuring humane treatment, prohibiting torture and reprisals, guaranteeing medical care, food, and dignified conditions, and limiting the information they are required to provide, defining their rights from capture to repatriation, and protecting them from combat zones under the custody of the enemy state rather than the capturing unit; and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, which protects serving heads of state, such as Nicolás Maduro, with absolute personal immunity (*ratione personae*) as stipulated in Article 29 of said Convention.

With respect to international legal norms violated by the USA, the following may be noted among others:

- The Charter of the United Nations
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, approved on December 10, 1948
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

- The United Nations Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Internal Affairs of States (1965)
- The approving law of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, adopted by the United Nations on December 9, 1999
- The Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (International Maritime Organization) of March 10, 1988
- The Rome Statute
- The Palermo Convention

At the regional level:

- The Charter of the Organization of American States and its respective reforms
- The American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man
- The American Convention on Human Rights
- The Inter-American Democratic Charter
- The approving law of the Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism, signed on June 3, 2002

**Conclusions:**

The conduct of the USA is a “democratized” expression of Nazi-fascist thought adopted and protected after World War II, in which only the political project of the Third Reich was defeated; that is, Nazism returned to the home of its natural partners, taking hold of that nation for decades, becoming, in the author’s view, the expression of a failed state that resorts to the disproportionate and unnecessary use of force on a continuous basis in order to impose its global political criteria amid its evident decline.