

The Strategic Implications of the ‘Donroe Doctrine’: From Honduras to Venezuela

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Abstract

This paper examines the emergence and strategic implications of the “Donroe Doctrine.” It is a contemporary reinterpretation of the Monroe Doctrine that combines U.S. nineteenth-century hemispheric power logic with the transactional foreign policy associated with Donald Trump’s second presidential term. Linked to the 2025 National Security Strategy, the doctrine aims to reassert U.S. primacy in the Western Hemisphere and to prevent extra-regional competitors from gaining control over strategically important assets. Using two case studies, this paper shows how the doctrine operates across a range of instruments, from coercive diplomacy to direct military action. The 2025 Honduran general election illustrates how electoral dynamics can be influenced through economic leverage and targeted sanctions from the U.S. Operation Absolute Resolve, the January 2026 capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, shows how a law-enforcement framing can be used to justify military intervention. This paper then argues that the doctrine’s deterrent signal reaches beyond Latin America. This is reflected in China’s limited ability to protect its partners in Venezuela and Iran after the U.S.-Israeli strikes in February 2026. For Taiwan, the doctrine offers a cautionary lesson: U.S. support can be consequential, but it remains transactional. Taiwan therefore needs stronger self-defense resilience and deeper military cooperation with Washington.

Keywords: Donald Trump, Donroe Doctrine, Honduras, Venezuela, Taiwan

I. Introduction

Since Donald Trump’s return to the White House as the 47th President of the United States, his administration has pursued a more assertive and interventionist foreign policy in the Western Hemisphere than what was seen in the preceding

decades. The policy encompasses aggressive immigration enforcement, coercive measures, and direct military action against foreign governments. The “Donroe Doctrine,” a portmanteau of “Donald Trump” and the “Monroe Doctrine,” was first coined by the *New York Post* in January 2025. It was later embraced by Trump himself following the January 2026 military operation in Venezuela, when he declared at a press conference, “The Monroe Doctrine is a big deal, but we’ve superseded it by a lot, by a real lot. They now call it the Donroe Doctrine.”¹



Figure 1. The “Gulf of America” Has Been Highlighted as an Element of the Donroe Doctrine

Source: Executive Office of the President of the United States, “President Donald Trump on Air Force One poses next to a map of the Gulf of America,” February 9, 2025, *Wikipedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donroe_Doctrine#/media/File:President_Donald_Trump_on_Air_Force_One_poses_next_to_a_map_of_the_Gulf_of_America_during_a_flight_to_New_Orleans_on_February_9,_2025.jpg>.

1. Mariam Khan, “Trump’s ‘Donroe Doctrine’ Seeks Influence over Western Hemisphere Citing Old US Policy.” January 6, 2026, *ABC News*, <<https://abcnews.com/Politics/trumps-donroe-doctrine-seeks-influence-western-hemisphere-citing/story?id=128926397>>.

Substantively, the Donroe Doctrine is linked to the 2025 National Security Strategy (NSS) released in December 2025.² The doctrine calls for reasserting the Monroe Doctrine and denying non-hemispheric competitors the ability to control strategic assets in the hemisphere. This paper examines the meaning and implications of the Donroe Doctrine through two case studies. The first is the 2025 Honduran general election, in which the Trump administration attempted to affect the electoral process through public endorsement and targeted restrictions on electoral authorities. The second is Operation Absolute Resolve, the January 3, 2026 military operation that resulted in the capture and extradition of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, in which Washington used direct force and a judicial narrative to justify the capture of a sitting leader. These cases illuminate the full spectrum of the Donroe Doctrine: from “soft” coercion to “hard” intervention.

This paper is organized as follows. Section II traces the historical evolution of the doctrine and discusses its main features. Section III provides a detailed analysis of how the doctrine affected the 2025 Honduran general election. Section IV examines the relationship between the doctrine and the U.S. military operation in Venezuela. Section V synthesizes the implications for Sino-American competition, regional stability, and Taiwan’s diplomatic prospects. Section VI offers conclusions.

II. Background and the Features of the Donroe Doctrine

The Donroe Doctrine draws on a long tradition of U.S. interventionism in the Western Hemisphere. Its ideas are originated from the Monroe Doctrine, which was articulated by President James Monroe in his 1823 State of the Union Address. The Monroe Doctrine established two foundational principles: the non-colonization of the Americas by European powers, and the separation of the Old World and the New World into distinct spheres of influence. Its first decisive transformation came in 1904, when President Theodore Roosevelt issued the “Roosevelt Corollary” in response to

2. The White House, “National Security Strategy of the United States of America,” 2025, *The White House*, <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2025-National-Security-Strategy.pdf>>.

a crisis in which European warships blockaded Venezuela to collect sovereign debts. Roosevelt asserted that the United States had the obligation to exercise “an international police power” to address the internal instability of neighboring countries.³ This corollary established a precedent for unilateralism, which justified a wave of military occupations across Latin American countries.⁴

The Cold War deepened this interventionist logic further, as Latin America became a laboratory for U.S. counterinsurgency and covert regime change, from the CIA-orchestrated overthrow of Guatemalan President Jacobo Árbenz in 1954 to Reagan’s support for the Contras in Nicaragua. By the late twentieth century, however, Washington appeared to step back from this tradition. In 2013, Secretary of State John Kerry declared that “the era of the Monroe Doctrine is over,” signaling a shift toward partnership and multilateralism.⁵

From the perspective of the second Trump administration, the principal threat to U.S. interests in the hemisphere was no longer European colonialism or Soviet communism but Chinese economic statecraft through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Russian military footprints in Cuba and Venezuela. The 2025 NSS formalized the response through two complementary commitments. It declared that the United States would “reassert and enforce the Monroe Doctrine to restore American preeminence in the Western Hemisphere.” Moreover, it introduced a “Trump Corollary,” which asserts a mandate to deny non-hemispheric competitors control over “strategically vital assets” within the region. Beyond hemispheric exclusivity, the Donroe Doctrine introduces two further instruments of coercion. The first is visa restrictions and sanctions against foreign politicians, and the second is the

3. Office of the Historian, “Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, 1904,” March 9, 2026 accessed, *Office of the Historian*, <<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/roosevelt-and-monroe-doctrine>>.

4. John Lewis Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

5. Nandika Chatterjee, “The 200-Year-Old Foreign Policy Vision Underlying Trump’s ‘Donroe Doctrine,’” January 7, 2026, *TIME*, <<https://time.com/7343795/trump-venezuela-monroe-doctrine-history/>>.



Figure 2. The China-CELAC Forum (2025)

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs PRC, “China-CELAC Forum 2025,” May 13, 2025, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs PRC*, <https://www.mfa.gov.cn/web/zyxw/202505/t20250513_11621917.shtml>.

weaponization of U.S. Department of Justice indictments to criminalize foreign leaders as “narco-terrorists.” The latter bypasses the need for UN Security Council authorization.

There are three structural drivers for the emergence of the Donroe Doctrine. The first driving force is U.S. strategic competition with China. Beginning in 2015, when Xi Jinping pledged US\$250 billion in investment in Latin America over the next 10 years, China has expanded economic statecraft in the region. The growing presence of infrastructure projects, such as Peru’s Chancay Port, has raised serious concerns about supply chain leverage and regional security for the United States. The second driver comes from domestic politics. The Trump administration frames migration and drug flows from Latin America as direct threats to internal security. That framing helps increase the urgency for the government to adopt rapid and visible actions to

“protect” U.S. citizens. The third driver is Latin America’s own rightward political shift, which reflects public frustration with crime and weak economic performance. The trend of “right turn” political change can create more space for Washington to build conservative partnerships.

III. Honduras 2025: Soft Intervention Through Leverage

1. Electoral Process

Even though the term Donroe Doctrine was not formalized until January 2026, its principles had been implemented in late 2025. The 2025 Honduran general election illustrates how the doctrine can influence another country without direct invasion. In this election, the doctrine was implemented by combining economic leverage and targeted punishment of key political figures.

Three principal candidates contested the presidency. Rixi Moncada of the ruling LIBRE party stood for continuation of the leftist platform and alignment with Beijing. Nasry “Tito” Asfura of the National Party, a conservative businessman and former mayor of Tegucigalpa, emerged as Trump’s preferred candidate. He committed to expelling Chinese influence and restoring U.S. strategic partnerships. Salvador Nasralla of the Liberal Party presented himself as a centrist, anti-corruption option. However, he used to be the vice president for Xiomara Castro. He resigned the post and turned to be affiliated with the Liberal Party in 2024. His unpredictable behavior and unclear ideological stance made it difficult for Washington to judge how he would act.

On December 24, 2025, the Honduran National Electoral Council (CNE) declared Asfura the winner with 40.26% of the vote, narrowly defeating Nasralla’s 39.55%, with Moncada a distant third at 19.20%. In the parliamentary election, however, the new Asfura administration will face a tripolar party system. Out of 128 seats in the National Congress, the National Party and the Liberal Party secured 49 and 41 seats, respectively. In contrast, LIBRE suffered a major defeat, as its seat share fell from 50 to 35.

Honduras is vulnerable to U.S. pressure due to two structural factors. Using a single-round plurality system for its presidential elections, Honduras elects a president without an absolute majority. As a result, small shifts in turnout or perceptions of candidates can change electoral outcomes. This design also made the fragmentation of the opposition vote more decisive than any candidate’s absolute popularity. Political messaging from powerful external actors can therefore have outsized effects in a close race. Moreover, Honduras is highly dependent on remittances. The World Bank reports that remittances accounted for 25.7 percent of GDP in 2024.⁶ Because most Honduran remittances came from the U.S., the dependency creates a channel for U.S. influence.

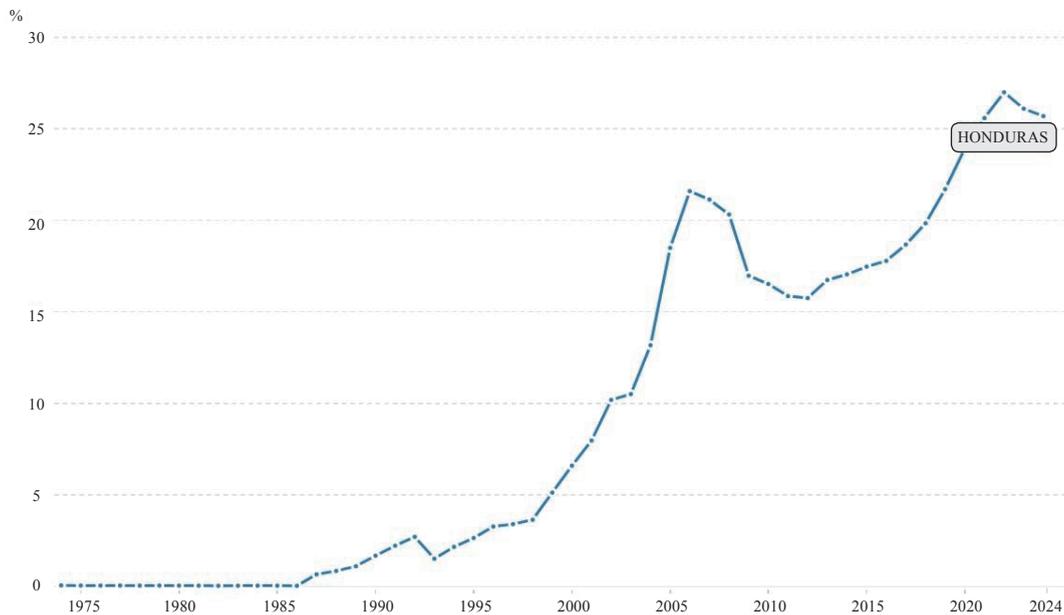


Figure 3. Personal Remittances, Received (% of GDP) - Honduras

Source: World Bank, “Personal remittances, received (% of GDP), Honduras.”

6. World Bank, “Personal remittances, received (% of GDP), Honduras,” March 9, 2026 accessed, *World Bank*, <<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=HN>>.

2. Explaining the Electoral Outcome

How did the Donroe Doctrine shape Nasry Asfura's victory? During the 2025 election cycle, the Trump administration acted in visible ways to affect Honduran electoral process. Before the electoral campaign period, former Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández had been convicted in a U.S. court and sentenced to 45 years on drug trafficking and weapons charges. However, Hernández had written to Trump requesting a review of his case, and Trump's advisers suggested that clemency could mobilize the National Party's support in the weeks before the election.⁷ As a result, the Trump administration pardoned Hernández before the election.

While Trump's pardon granted to Hernández signaled an indirect support for the National Party, Trump publicly showed his support for the party's candidate, Nasry Asfura, during the close vote count. Trump warned that there would be consequences if the count changed in ways he deemed illegitimate.⁸ Moreover, Trump warned in public that the United States would stop funding Honduras if the "right" candidate did not win.⁹ This message tied U.S. economic support, and indirectly the livelihoods of millions of Hondurans, to the election result.

The U.S. government also used targeted restrictions against key Honduran politicians. On election night, the website of the Honduran National Electoral Council (CNE) went offline due to "technical problems," preventing the release of results. Trump accused CNE officials of "trying to change the results" and warning there would be "hell to pay" if they did so.¹⁰ The State Department announced visa restrictions on Marlon Ochoa, a member of the Honduran National Electoral Council,

7. Nadine Yousif, "What Was Honduras Ex-president Convicted of and Why Has Trump Pardoned Him?" December 3, 2025, *BBC News*, <<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c9qewln7912o>>.

8. "US denies visas to Honduran electoral officials amid election chaos," December 20, 2025, *Reuters*, <<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/us-denies-visa-honduran-electoral-official-election-results-delay-2025-12-20/>>.

9. Michael Rios, Mauricio Torres, & Gonzalo Zegarra, "Trump-backed ex-mayor declared winner of Honduran presidential election," December 25, 2025, *CNN*, <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/12/24/americas/honduras-presidential-election-results-latam-intl>.

10. Bradford Betz, "Trump Warns Honduras of 'Hell to Pay' If Election Count Changes, Presses Official to Finish Tally," December 2, 2025, *New York Post*, <<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-warns-honduras-hell-pay-election-count-changes-presses-officials-finish-tally>>.

and revoked the visa of Mario Morazán, the head of Honduras’ electoral court. This direct intervention in Honduras’ election administration reflected U.S. frustration with vote-count delays. It also aimed to pressure the Honduran government to reach an outcome that Washington preferred.

U.S. intervention was not the only factor shaping the 2025 electoral outcome. Honduran voters had their own grievances. President Xiomara Castro had switched diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China in 2023, promising massive infrastructure investment and expanded market access. By late 2025, however, most of these promises had failed to materialize.¹¹ Megaprojects remained on paper because



Figure 4. Nasry Tito Asfura Became President of Honduras in 2026

Source: Nasry Tito Asfura, “el 30 de noviembre llenamos las urnas, que revienten, porque voy a ser el presidente de Honduras,” November 25, 2025, *Facebook*, <<https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=1387555696489783&set=pcb.1387555739823112>>.

11. Juan Fernando Herrera Ramos, “Honduras’ Election Could Reopen the Door to Taiwan,” August 29, 2025, *Ketagalan Media*, <<https://ketagalanmedia.com/2025/08/29/honduras-election-could-reopen-the-door-to-taiwan/>>.

they were stalled by bureaucratic delays and China's own economic slowdown. Combined with persistently high crime rates, the economic disappointment drove voters away from the incumbent-backed candidate and toward the opposition. The victory of Nasry Asfura thus reflected both external pressure and genuine domestic disillusionment. More importantly, it marked the first successful test of the Donroe Doctrine.

IV. Venezuela 2026: Hard Intervention Under a Law-Enforcement Frame

1. Execution of the Operation Absolute Resolve

Venezuela represents the hard end of the Donroe Doctrine's coercive spectrum. On January 3, 2026, the Trump administration carried out Operation Absolute Resolve, capturing Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, and transferring them to New York to face federal prosecution. The operation was the product of months of preparation across military, cyber, and intelligence channels. From late 2025, U.S. Southern Command conducted high-intensity naval exercises off Venezuela's coast, which were officially framed as counter-narcotics operations but functioned in practice as a *de facto* blockade that constrained Iranian fuel deliveries and Russian military hardware shipments to the Maduro regime. In addition, intelligence agencies tracked Maduro's movements and rehearsed the raid using a full-scale replica of his Caracas safe house.¹² By the time the operation was launched, the groundwork had been laid to minimize resistance and maximize the likelihood of a successful capture.

To justify the operation, the Trump administration framed Maduro not as a legitimate head of state but as the leader of the "Cartel of the Suns," a criminal organization responsible for trafficking large quantities of cocaine into the United States. By classifying him as a criminal rather than a sovereign leader, Washington bypassed the legal protections that the UN Charter normally extends to sitting heads

12. Gareth Evans, "Spies, Drones and Blowtorches: How the US Captured Maduro," January 5, 2026, *BBC News*, <<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cdred61epg4o>>.

of government. U.S. courts reinforced this position by rejecting Maduro’s defense team’s invocation of head-of-state immunity, on the grounds that his disputed 2024 re-election lacked legitimacy and could therefore not generate legal protection. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio insisted publicly that the United States was “not at war” with Venezuela and that the operation was a “law enforcement” action rather than an act of military aggression. In this sense, Washington bypassed the international legal norms on the use of force and sovereignty stipulated in the UN Charter’s rules. The legal framing in the case of Venezuela was consequential: it allowed the U.S. government to present the capture of a sitting president as a routine criminal prosecution rather than a violation of state sovereignty.

2. Explaining the Operation

Three distinct yet overlapping motivations drove the U.S. military operation in Venezuela on January 3, 2026. The first primary strategic driver was energy. Venezuela holds the world’s largest proven oil reserves, estimated at 303 billion barrels, or roughly 17% of global reserves, yet its production had collapsed to approximately 1.1 million barrels per day in 2025, down from 3.5 million in the 1970s.¹³ Oil production had been prioritized for supply partnerships with Russia, Iran, and China. From the perspective of the Donroe Doctrine, the goal is that such strategic asset could not be under the control of non-hemispheric competitors. At a press conference on January 3, Trump stated that U.S. oil companies would “go in, spend billions of dollars, fix the badly broken infrastructure, the oil infrastructure, and start making money for the country.”¹⁴ U.S. Energy Secretary Chris Wright visited Caracas in February 2026 and made clear that “the U.S. goal is to gain a foothold in the country’s vast oil reserves rather than helping Venezuela transition to democracy.”¹⁵

13. “Venezuela’s Oil and Mining Sectors: Large Potential, Weak Infrastructure,” January 6, 2026, *Reuters*, <<https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/venezuelan-oil-industry-worlds-largest-reserves-decaying-infrastructure-2026-01-03/>>.

14. Dewardric L. McNeal, “Trump’s ‘Donroe Doctrine’ and China Are Headed for Latin America Clash,” January 11, 2026, *CNBC*, <<https://www.cnbc.com/2026/01/11/trump-venezuela-greenland-donroe-doctrine-china.html>>.

15. Monica de Bolle, “Trump’s Latter-Day Monroe Doctrine Is Aimed at China,” February 17, 2026, *PIIE*, <<https://www.piie.com/blogs/realtime-economics/2026/trumps-latter-day-monroe-doctrine-aimed-china>>.

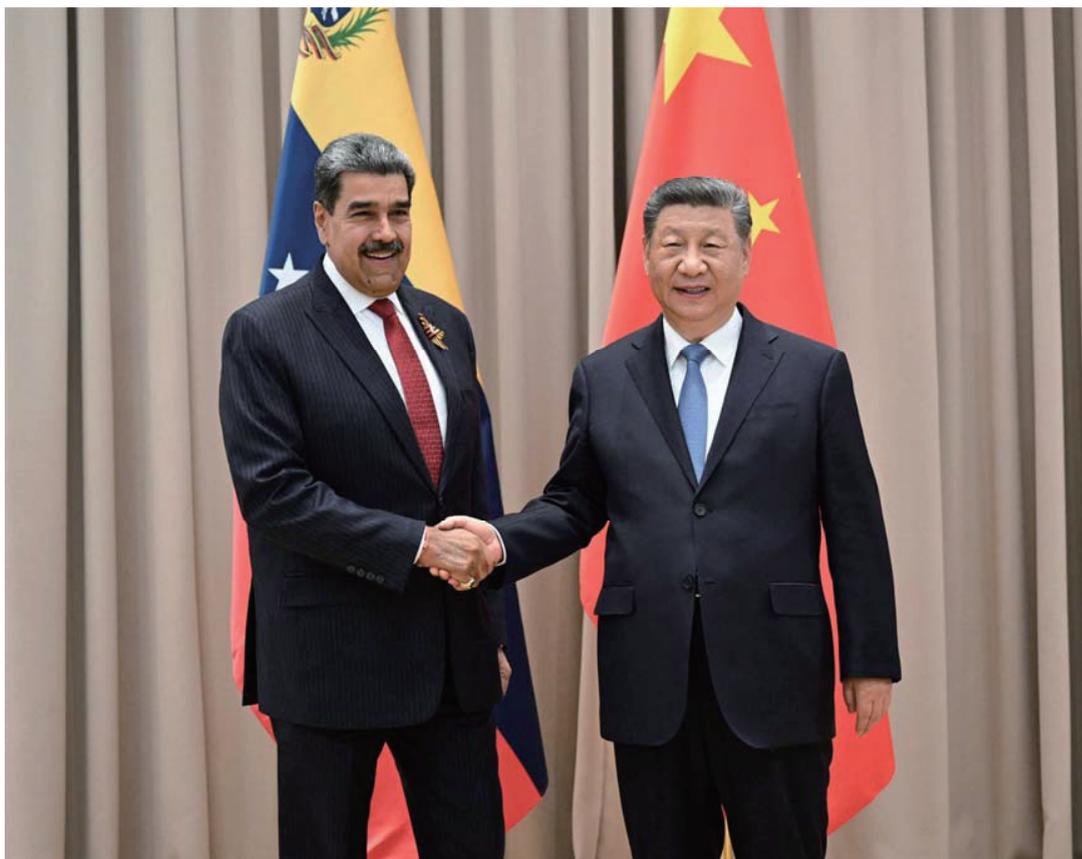


Figure 5. Chinese President Xi Jinping Meets with Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro

Source: The State Council Information Office PRC, “Xi says China to firmly support Venezuela in safeguarding sovereignty, social stability,” May 10, 2025, *The State Council Information Office PRC*, <http://english.scio.gov.cn/m/topnews/2025-05/10/content_117868071.html>.

The second motivation was geopolitical. The operation indicates a desire to deny China and Russia a foothold in the Western Hemisphere. China had invested more than US\$62 billion in Venezuela, representing 53% of all Chinese lending to the region, while Russia had deployed air defense systems and maintained close military and intelligence ties with the Maduro regime.¹⁶ The Trump administration demanded

¹⁶ Yoni Michanie, “Maduro’s fall decimates the Russia-Iran-China axis in Latin America - opinion,” January 11, 2026, *The Jerusalem Post*, <<https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-882611>>.

that transitional authorities remove officials and advisers linked to China, Russia, Iran, the Lebanese Hezbollah, and North Korea. Secretary of State Rubio made this geopolitical logic explicit, stating that the operation was intended to stop Venezuela “from cooperating with countries like Russia, China, Cuba, and Iran.”¹⁷

The third official justification centered on drug trafficking and the wave of undocumented migration. The Trump administration alleged that Maduro had facilitated the drug trafficking into the United States, even though Venezuela was never a significant drug producer, compared to other Latin American countries. Moreover, the Maduro regime’s economic collapse had produced 8 million Venezuelans fleeing over a decade, which was the largest wave of mass migration in this hemisphere’s recent history.¹⁸ Trump has repeatedly framed migration from Venezuela as a security threat and a burden on U.S. border policy.

V. Strategic Implications of the Donroe Doctrine

The cases of intervention in Honduras’ general election and the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro are the recent implementations of the Donroe Doctrine. They suggest three crucial strategic implications for international relations.

1. Restoring the U.S. Hegemonic Dominance

The first strategic implication of the Donroe Doctrine is that it justifies the U.S. restoration of the hegemonic dominance in the Western Hemisphere. While the United States has long used sanctions and military operations in the Latin American region, the novelty of the doctrine is in the explicitness. Unlike most past U.S. interventions in Latin America, which were justified in the language of maintaining regional order, the doctrine is explicit about serving U.S. national interests.

17. Caroline Linton, “Cotton Says ‘There’s No Such Implication’ of a Swap in which Russia Abandons Venezuela for U.S. to Abandon Ukraine,” January 4, 2026, *CBS NEWS*, <<https://www.cbsnews.com/live-updates/venezuela-us-military-strikes-maduro-trump/#post-update-62864716>>.

18. Diana Roy, “The U.S. Military Campaign Targeting Venezuela and Nicolás Maduro: What to Know,” January 3, 2026, *CFR*, <<https://www.cfr.org/articles/operation-southern-spear-us-military-campaign-targeting-venezuela>>.

From Beijing's perspective, the Donroe Doctrine represents a serious challenge to China's long-term economic statecraft in Latin America. China had built its diplomatic strategy in Latin America on the premise that economic engagement would be protected by the international legal order. Chinese infrastructure investment, trade agreements, and diplomatic partnerships were not expected to be subject to unilateral U.S. disruption.¹⁹ The Donroe Doctrine demonstrates that Beijing's economic premise was contingent on Washington's restraint. Moreover, the doctrine aims to sever China's Latin American supply chains and deny Beijing access to critical minerals and energy resources. In December 2025, the new China's Policy Paper on Latin America and the Caribbean had designated the region as central to Belt and Road expansion and its 15th Five-Year Plan priorities, including manufacturing cooperation and technology transfer. The U.S. operation exposed that this ambitious agenda now confronts a Washington willing to use military force to restore its hegemonic dominance.

Beyond the immediate cases of Honduras and Venezuela, the Donroe Doctrine has imposed a new logic of alignment across Latin America. In March 2026, the Trump administration hosted a "Shield of the Americas" summit in Miami, bringing together right-wing heads of state from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, and Trinidad and Tobago to build a "counter-cartel coalition" and reinforce the Donroe Doctrine's framework.²⁰ The doctrine's "reward-and-punish" approach implies backing right-wing allies while penalizing left-leaning governments. Under such conditions, keeping neutrality becomes risky. Governments across Latin America are likely to bandwagon with Washington, at least in the short run. It is because the military operation in Venezuela has shown that opposition against the Trump administration carries serious costs.

19. Rebecca Nadinj, "Trump's Monroe Doctrine 2.0 Redefines Great Power Competition in the Americas — Now It's Beijing's Move," January 5, 2026, *ODI*, <<https://odi.org/en/insights/trumps-monroe-doctrine-beijings-next-move/>>.

20. Edward Helmore, "Trump convenes 'Shield of Americas' summit with 12 Latin American leaders," March 7, 2026, *The Guardian*, <<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/mar/07/trump-shield-of-americas-summit>>.



Figure 6. The Shield of the Americas Summit

Source: The White House, “President Donald J. Trump poses for a Family Photo with world leaders at the Shield of the Americas summit at Trump National Doral,” March 7, 2026, *flickr*, <<https://www.flickr.com/photos/whitehouse/55138034666/>>.

2. Putting China’s Credibility into Question

The second strategic implication suggests that the implementation of the Donroe Doctrine might make China lose credibility. Latin America has a long memory of intervention. When intervention becomes explicit again, anti-American narratives regain political power. Moreover, the U.S. aggressive push to expel Chinese influence could produce economic disruption and political backlash that ultimately strengthens Beijing’s influence. Hedging toward China remains attractive. China remains a major market for commodities and manufactured goods. China is also an important infrastructure builder and provider due to its BRI. If U.S. policy becomes more coercive, it is expected that many Latin American governments might prefer hedging strategies that preserve autonomy.

However, the feasibility of a hedging strategy for Latin American countries becomes increasingly unclear. This is partly because the capture of Maduro has exposed the limits of China's commitment to its partners. In September 2023, China elevated Venezuela to an "All-Weather Strategic Partnership," representing the highest-level diplomatic designation. Such a partnership is shared with only five other nations: Pakistan (2015), Belarus (2022), Ethiopia (2024), Uzbekistan (2024), and Hungary (2024). The designation aims to build the strongest cooperation in politics, security, and economics between China and its allies.

Yet on the night of January 2, 2026, Maduro met with China's special envoy, Qiu Xiaoyi, and pledged to maintain "strategic relations." Hours later, U.S. forces seized Maduro. China mainly responded by condemning the U.S. operation and urging for political unity. This was the second time in eight months that China's diplomatic assurances had resulted in no tangible protection for its ally: first with Iran, when the U.S. bombed Iranian nuclear sites in June 2025, and then with Venezuela in January 2026. Even though the "All-Weather Strategic Partnership" does not explicitly include formal security guarantees, the political signal that China's inaction sends to other governments calls into questions about the reliability of Beijing's partnerships. Latin American governments have splintered sharply in their responses, with some condemning the raid as an intolerable breach of sovereignty (e.g., Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia), others welcoming Maduro's removal (Argentina and Ecuador), and the rest remaining silent in moments of crisis. This fragmentation itself reflects the erosion of a coherent "Global South" solidarity narrative that China had long tried to cultivate.

3. Strategic Implications Beyond Latin America

The Donroe Doctrine has broader strategic implications for other regions. Specifically, while the doctrine focuses on preventing any non-Western hemisphere competitors from interfering in the hemisphere's affairs, its deterrent effects for China will not be limited to the Western Hemisphere. The U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran, launched on February 28, 2026, under "Operation Epic Fury," carry significant implications for China's strategic position in the Middle East. Iran is a partner often framed as part of China's counterbalancing axis. The country serves as a crucial

node in the BRI. Military strikes on Iranian coastal facilities at Asaluyeh or Bandar Abbas destroyed Chinese-funded logistics networks, which are vital to the access to international waters without relying on Western-dominated strategic chokepoints.²¹

China’s response to the Iran strikes mirrored its response to the capture of Maduro weeks earlier: verbal condemnation accompanied by an absence of concrete action. This consistent pattern across two theaters worsens China’s credibility



Figure 7. US Aircraft on the Flight Deck of the USS Abraham Lincoln Take Part in Operation Epic Fury

Source: United States Department of Defense, “Numerous US aircraft sit on the flight deck of USS Abraham Lincoln in support of Operation Epic Fury,” February 26, 2026, *Wikipedia*, <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2026_Iran_war#/media/File:U_S_Forces_Launch_Operation_Epic_Fury_\(9542157\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2026_Iran_war#/media/File:U_S_Forces_Launch_Operation_Epic_Fury_(9542157).jpg)>.

21. Silvia Boltuc, “How Russian and Chinese Tech Underpins Iranian Strategic Depth,” March 1, 2026, *SpecialEurasia*, <<https://www.specialeurasia.com/2026/03/01/russia-china-iran-tech-military/>>.

problem. Other states that have come to rely on Chinese partnerships as a hedge against U.S. pressure are left to draw an uncomfortable conclusion: when U.S. hard power is brought to bear against a government aligned with Beijing, Chinese solidarity does not extend beyond diplomatic statements.

What are the Donroe Doctrine's implications for Taiwan's prospect of international survival? One might argue that if the United States can use blockade and military decapitation tactics in what it considers its own sphere of influence, China may feel emboldened to take analogous actions against Taiwan. The comparison is worth reconsidering. Specifically, given that China has long shown military hostility toward Taiwan, what it lacks is not a good justification, but effective ways to invade. In short, China does not need to cite the U.S. case of military operation as a precedent; its territorial claims over Taiwan predate and are independent of any analogy with Venezuela.

The Trump administration in November 2025 approved a record arms sale to Taiwan of approximately US\$11 billion. This move can serve as an immediate deterrent. It also helps Taiwan withstand future pressure and gives Washington more flexibility to reduce direct security commitments without triggering an immediate crisis. However, Taiwan should treat U.S. support as important, but not unconditional. For Taiwan to secure U.S. commitment and assistance in countering the Chinese threat, it must invest more to strengthen its defense resilience. Moreover, U.S.-Taiwan military cooperation and integration must be deepened. Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense has recently established a Joint Firepower Cooperation Center, which coordinates firepower deployment across service branches through joint operations with U.S. forces. This represents a commendable approach.

Furthermore, the implementation of the Donroe Doctrine has created favorable opportunities for Taiwan's diplomatic footprint in Latin America. China's credibility damage following Maduro's capture indicates that many Latin American governments might start to reassess their relationships with Beijing. This could create favorable opportunities for Taiwan's international survival. The most immediate indicator is whether newly inaugurated Honduran President Nasry Asfura will reestablish



Figure 8. Recent U.S. Arms Sales to Taiwan Include the HIMARS

Source: Isabelle Dickey, “Romanian HIMARS loaded into a Royal Air Force A400M Atlas,” November 7, 2022, *Wikipedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M142_HIMARS#/media/File:Romanian_HIMARS_loaded_into_an_RAF_A400M_airplane.jpg>.

diplomatic relations with Taiwan during his term. If relations are restored, it is likely that Taiwan would avoid further diplomatic setbacks in Latin America. Under more optimistic scenarios, Taiwan will be likely to recover and expand its diplomatic presence in the region.

VI. Conclusion

The Donroe Doctrine is a structurally coherent strategy articulated in the 2025 National Security Strategy and designed to re-establish U.S. primacy in the context of Sino-American competition. The Honduras and Venezuela episodes show two ends of a coercive spectrum. The case of the Honduran election illustrates how electoral processes can be influenced through leverage and signaling. The case of the capture of Maduro in Venezuela illustrates how a law-enforcement narrative can be paired with

military action. Together, these two cases demonstrate that the doctrine functions as a policy to exclude outside powers from the Americas and to actively manage hemispheric political outcomes.

Even though the weaponization of the U.S. judicial system against foreign leaders has undermined the UN Charter's rules on the use of force and sovereignty, the Donroe Doctrine has demonstrated effectiveness and reasserted the credibility of U.S. coercive power in the hemisphere. It challenged China's diplomatic footprint in Central America, eliminated a longstanding adversarial regime in South America, and secured access to the world's largest proven oil reserves. For Taiwan, the key decision to make is to prepare for geopolitical uncertainty. The Donroe Doctrine is a clear example of a new era of spheres-of-influence politics. It demonstrates that U.S. support, when it comes, can be overwhelming in its force. It equally demonstrates that such support is based on a transactional calculus that can shift with strategic priorities. Taiwan's long-term security rests not on assuming that U.S. commitment will remain unconditional, but on ensuring that the cost-benefit calculation in Washington always favors defending Taiwan.