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FEATURED Q&A

What Will Result From the Capture of Venezuela's Maduro?

U.S. forces on Saturday seized Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and transported him and his wife to New York, where they both face drug and weapons charges. // File Photo: U.N. Photo/Rick Bajornas.

Q U.S. forces on Saturday captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro in what U.S. President Donald Trump called a "large scale strike" in the South American country. Maduro and his wife, who reportedly were dragged from their bedroom in the middle of the night, were flown to New York where they both face drug and weapons charges. Meanwhile, Trump said the United States will "run" Venezuela until a "judicious transition" can occur. What will the U.S. military's presence look like in Venezuela in the coming weeks, months and years? Who will now assume political power in Venezuela? What does the U.S. operation against Maduro mean for Washington's relations with Latin America more broadly and for Venezuela's oil sector?

A Michael Shifter, senior fellow and former president of the Inter-American Dialogue: "The first ever U.S. military strike in a South American country was executed silently and skillfully. It achieved its mission—to extract Nicolás Maduro from power and from Venezuela to face drug and weapons charges in New York City. That action, tantamount to a declaration of war, enabled Trump to declare victory, even if it violated international law and the U.N. Charter and was carried out without congressional consultation, much less authorization. Most worrying was President Trump's declared intention to govern Venezuela, with the barely disguised purpose of appropriating and developing the country's badly deteriorated petroleum sector. Although Trump called for a 'judicious transition,' there was no mention of assisting Venezuela to move to democratic rule. Trump seemed confident that

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TODAY'S NEWS

POLITICAL

Maduro, Wife to Face Judge Today in New York

Ousted Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, are to be arraigned today in U.S. federal court in New York following their seizure on Saturday by U.S. forces.

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ECONOMIC

Oil Markets Steady After U.S. Deposes Maduro

Oil markets showed limited reaction after the U.S. seizure on Saturday of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. Early today, U.S. oil futures rose about 0.4 percent, while Brent prices were up a similar amount, trading at about $61.

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POLITICAL

Trump Threatens Action Against Colombia, Mexico

Following U.S. forces' capture on Saturday of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, U.S. President Donald Trump threatened action against other countries, including Colombia and Mexico.

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Trump // File Photo: White House.

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POLITICAL NEWS

Venezuela's Maduro, Wife to Face Judge Today in New York

Ousted Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, are to appear today in a U.S. federal courtroom in New York for arraignment after their seizure on Saturday in Caracas by U.S. forces, The New York Times reported. Maduro and Flores are charged with drug and weapons crimes and are to appear at noon in the courtroom of Judge Alvin Hellerstein in Manhattan. They are expected to plead not guilty, and the judge is likely to order them to be detained, The New York Times reported. The couple, who appeared to be wearing brown jumpsuits, were transferred this morning from the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn where they had been held since their capture on Saturday, to Manhattan for their court appearance. Maduro's lawyers are expected to argue that his arrest was illegal and contend that he has immunity from prosecution as the head of state of a sovereign nation, the Associated Press reported. However, the U.S. government does not recognize Maduro as the legitimate president of Venezuela, particularly following the South American country's widely disputed presidential election in 2024. The U.S. military operation that led to the capture of Maduro and Flores in the early morning hours on Saturday involved more than 150 aircraft that were launched from 20 bases "across the Western Hemisphere," Gen. Dan Caine, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Saturday alongside U.S. President Donald Trump at a press conference at Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida. Trump said Saturday that the United States would "run" Venezuela "until such time as we can do a safe, proper and judicious transition," a statement that he reiterated on Sunday night to reporters aboard Air Force One as he returned to Washington. "We're going to run it, fix it. We'll have elections at the right time," Trump said Sunday, The Hill reported. Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Sunday had seemed to walk back Trump's claim that his government would administer Venezuela, saying that the United States would only enforce an oil embargo, The Hill reported. Venezuela's vice president, Delcy Rodríguez, who took office as the country's acting president following Maduro's ouster, initially was scathing in her criticism of the Trump administration's actions, calling them "a barbarity" and adding that its goal was "the seizure of our energy, mineral and natural resources," The New York Times reported. However, on Sunday night, in a statement directed at Trump, she said, "Our people and our region deserve peace and dialogue, not war." She added, "We extend an invitation to the U.S. government to work together on a cooperative agenda, oriented toward shared development, within the framework of international law, and to strengthen lasting community coexistence," The New York Times reported. On Sunday morning, Trump told The Atlantic in a telephone interview that if Rodríguez "doesn't do what's right, she is going to pay a very big price, probably bigger than Maduro." The United Nations Security Council is set to hold an emergency meeting today to discuss Maduro's capture. On Saturday, the United Nations released a statement saying Secretary General António Guterres was "deeply alarmed by the recent escalation in Venezuela" and added that the U.S. military action sets a "dangerous precedent," the Wall Street Journal reported.

Trump Threatens Action Against Colombia, Mexico

Following U.S. forces' capture on Saturday of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, U.S. President Donald Trump threatened action against other countries, including Colombia and Mexico, The New York Times reported. As he returned to Washington from Florida aboard Air Force One, Trump told reporters that Colombia is "being run by a sick man who likes making cocaine and selling it to the United States," an apparent reference to Colombian President Gustavo Petro. "He's not going to be doing it for very long," Trump added. Petro, who was sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury in

NEWS BRIEFS

U.S. Strikes in Venezuela Kill 32 Cuban Officers

Thirty-two Cuban military officers were killed in the Saturday morning U.S. military operation that ended with the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, Cuba's government said Sunday, the Associated Press reported. Venezuela's government has yet to release its own estimated death toll from the operation, which included airstrikes on military barracks. The Cuban officers were in Venezuela at the request of the South American country's government, according to the AP. No U.S. forces were killed in Saturday's strike, U.S. President Donald Trump said on Sunday.

World Leaders Have Mixed Reactions to Maduro's Capture

World leaders, including in Latin America, offered a mixture of reactions to the U.S. seizure of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. Colombian President Gustavo Petro wrote on X that he rejected "the aggression against the sovereignty of Venezuela," while Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel denounced what he called "a criminal attack" by the United States, The New York Times reported. Meanwhile, Argentine President Javier Milei celebrated Maduro's capture, saying on X that "Liberty advances."

Airlines Resume Normal Activities in Caribbean After U.S. Military Strikes

Commercial flights in Caribbean airspace resumed regular operations on Sunday after being interrupted by the U.S. military operation in Venezuela and capture of President Nicolás Maduro on Saturday morning, NBC's Miami-based local television station reported. Maduro was transported from Venezuela to New York City later in the day on Saturday.

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October, has rejected such allegations. When asked whether the United States would pursue action targeting Colombia, Trump said, "It sounds good to me," The New York Times reported. Trump also told reporters that drugs are "pouring" through Mexico, adding "we're going to have to do something" and that drug cartels are "very strong," the newspaper reported. Trump also said U.S. military action is not needed in Cuba because the country is "ready to fall." In his remarks, Trump also reiterated his desire to take control of Greenland.

ECONOMIC NEWS

Oil Markets Steady After U.S. Deposes Venezuela's Maduro

Oil markets showed limited reaction to the U.S. military's attack in Caracas and capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro over the weekend; Brent crude oil has risen by approximately 50 cents relative to Friday's close and is now trading at about $61 per barrel, The Wall Street Journal reported. Investors are waiting for further clarity regarding the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump's plans for the South American country's oil sector, the newspaper reported. Trump said Saturday that U.S.-based oil companies will play a key role in the post-Maduro Venezuela. "We're going to have our very large U.S. oil companies, the biggest anywhere in the world, go in, spend billions of dollars, fix the badly broken infrastructure … and start making money for the country," Trump told reporters at a press conference at his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida. Trump added that an existing U.S. blockade affecting sanctioned oil vessels departing from Venezuela will remain in place indefinitely, Reuters reported. Venezuela has more crude oil reserves than any country on earth, but the country's oil production has declined in recent years amid geopolitical tensions and liquidity constraints at state-run PDVSA. Neighboring Guyana surpassed Venezuela in terms of daily crude oil production in August.

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Chavista officials who remained, led by interim President Delcy Rodríguez, would willingly obey his dictates. If they didn't, Trump threatened another military intervention, this one presumably of even greater scale and force than the first. He was openly dismissive of María Corina Machado and her valid claim to democratic legitimacy. For Trump, democracy is not a concern—it is all about money, power and protecting the homeland from drugs and criminals. Uncertainty abounds. It is unclear if the U.S. military will have a presence in Venezuela in the coming months or what the transition and power arrangements will entail. The administration evinces scant appreciation of the enormous risks and obstacles to attaining order and security in Venezuela. The military action will make many Latin Americans even more apprehensive about the use—and abuse—of U.S. power under Trump, who seems to respect no rules and knows no limits."

Gustavo Roosen, member of the Advisor board and president of IESA in Caracas: "What has taken place in Venezuela puts to the test the version of the Monroe Doctrine that Donald Trump revived in November. The central issue is whether U.S. policy toward Venezuela is driven by short-term utilitarian interests—particularly energy and geopolitical leverage—or by a genuine commitment to democratic restoration. This ambiguity has broader consequences for Washington's relations with Latin America, where U.S. credibility has historically depended on whether its actions are perceived as principled. For Latin America, the Venezuelan case will serve as a benchmark for how seriously the United States is willing to defend democratic norms when doing so entails political and economic costs. A strategy framed primarily around oil risks reinforcing longstanding regional suspicions of U.S. interventionism, whereas a clearly articulated commitment to democratic governance could strengthen hemispheric cooperation and legitimacy.

The persistent emphasis on Venezuela's oil sector appears aimed largely at a U.S. domestic audience. Within Venezuela, however, it is widely understood that restoring oil production is not simply a matter of political change or access to reserves. Recovery will require the return of risk capital and advanced technology, both of which depend on the re-establishment of the rule of law and credible institutions. More broadly, focusing narrowly on oil risks obscuring the scale of Venezuela's economic collapse. Any sustainable transition will require international engagement that goes well beyond the energy sector. The country's severe poverty levels are the result of the destruction of its entire productive apparatus, not merely the decline of oil output."

Julia Buxton, professor of justice at Liverpool John Moores University: "Despite the White House backslapping, this intervention was undertaken from a U.S. position of weakness. Trump was out of options. Oil tanker seizures put Venezuela on a countdown to shortage and renewed migratory and humanitarian crises. At least 40 civilians are reported to have been killed in the 'extraction' of Maduro and his wife, and following the military 'shock and awe,' no credible plan for Venezuela's 'reconstruction,' security or apparent U.S. governance with Maduro's vice president, Delcy Rodríguez, has been provided. In a rambling speech on Saturday at Mar-a-Lago, President Trump talked of U.S. oil companies as the motor of Venezuela's recovery. No difficult questions were asked, including why investment in Venezuela's heavy and expensive-to-drill oil is a golden opportunity during an oil glut. This is before considering the complex legal environment, ongoing creditor and bondholder claims and repayment of Venezuela's massive debts to China. Developments in the days ahead and any numbers, role and longevity of U.S. boots on the ground will be determined

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by the speed with which the United States responds to the limbo that this intervention has created and opens the economy by lifting sanctions and facilitating imports. The Trump administration calculates that in bypassing María Corina Machado, the United States is spared the necessary commitment to secure and stabilize her presidency. In jettisoning regime change, the United States risks being sucked into a bigger military and economic commitment by underestimating the challenges of stabilization in cases of leadership 'decapitation.'"

Maria Velez de Berliner, chief strategy officer at RTG-Red Team Group, Inc.: "Venezuela's politically divided, guerrilla/colectivo infested, geographically large country is what U.S. troops will find if they are deployed to 'run' the country on Trump's behalf. Getting rid of Maduro was for the Venezuelans to do with the covert assistance of U.S. Special Operations forces, not for the U.S. military to extricate Maduro and run the country. The U.S. military is not effective at nation-building, which is what Venezuela requires now. Political intervention will be done by U.S. Secretary Rubio, who seems to be deputized by Trump to handle anything related to Latin America. If, as Trump indicated, María Corina Machado is likely not part of the transition team, it will lack one of the key players in Venezuelan politics. Latin America waits to see how the United States acts in Venezuela to determine the level of peril each center-left country is in. Trump already told President Petro of Colombia to watch his behind or suffer the same fate as Maduro. Following Colombia, Cuba, Peru and Mexico are likely candidates for U.S. military interventions. Presidents of the right are not safe either. If they displease Trump, they might be subject to their own 'Operation Absolute Resolve.' Venezuela shows Trump will continue to deploy a muscular, military policy in the region. The major winners, so far, are the U.S. oil companies that stand to gain millions from the reconstruction of Venezuela's immense oil reserves. But this reconstruction will take years to complete. And let's not overlook the riches of the Orinoco Mining Arc that are up for grabs by U.S. mining companies."

José R. Cárdenas, principal at The Cormac Group in Washington: "Days after the audacious U.S. military operation to capture Nicolás Maduro, the Venezuelan dictator sits in a Brooklyn jail cell awaiting his day in court to face U.S. narcotrafficking charges. That is about the only thing we know for certain at this point, as befits any event of this kind. Still, in his Saturday press conference, President Trump dropped several hints about the post-Maduro order—which were addressed further by Secretary of State Marco Rubio on the Sunday talk shows—that indicate the proximate course of events. The number-one priority of the administration is the immediate cessation of Venezuelan activity that threaten U.S. interests, namely drug trafficking and Venezuela's use as a strategic platform by U.S. adversaries. Following that, it appears that only when a new equilibrium has been established will the issue of new elections be pursued. Aside from stating the United States will 'run' the transition, Trump raised eyebrows by naming regime Vice President Delcy Rodríguez as the U.S. primary interlocutor in the days and weeks ahead. Maybe that reflects a lack of confidence in the opposition's ability to consolidate control of the country, maybe it's a feint to keep regime elements off balance, or maybe it's a strategic gamble to secure the cooperation of the military and security forces in pursuing U.S. objectives. As we know, it is not in the nature of this administration to telegraph its foreign policy strategies or tactics. But if the goal, as stated, is a Venezuela ready to work with the United States on shared interests and challenges, then the successful raid to remove Maduro from power means we should give President Trump the benefit of the doubt as we move forward."

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