

What role does Latin America play in today's global geopolitical landscape, considering its natural resources, energy transition potential, and political fragmentation?

Dr David Rees. March 2026

US intervention in Latin America

Latin America has been subject to constant interference and 'overthrow' which shapes the current political geopolitics of the area.

- Reading. [Overthrow](#) by Steven Kinzer.
- [Confessions of an Economic Hitman](#)

56 U.S. MILITARY INTERVENTIONS IN LATIN AMERICA



US Intervention

- Panama 1903. US backed independence from Colombia to build the Panama canal
- Haiti 1915. US Military control
- Dominican Republic 1916. US Military government
- Nicaragua. 1912-1933. Repeated intervention and occupation
- Guatemala. 1954. CIA-backed coup. Military regime.
- Cuba. 1961. Bay of Pigs (failure)
- Brazil. 1964. US military coup. 21 year military dictatorship

US Intervention

- Chile. 1973. CIA-backed overthrow of Allende. Pinochet dictatorship.
- Nicaragua. 1979. US funds Contra rebels.
- El Salvador. 1980. US provides billions \$ to oppose leftist groups.
- Grenada. 1983. US invasion
- Panama. 1989. US invasion.
- Haiti. 1994. US restores Jean-Bertrand Aristide

US Intervention

- Venezuela. 2002. Coup attempt against Hugo Chavez.
Recognised opposition in 2019
- Honduras. 2009. US help military remove President Zelaya
- Bolivia. 2019. US diplomatic coup
- Cuba. Sanctions – and now without oil (Venezuela sanctions)
- Nicaragua. 2018. Sanctions. Attempts at regime change
- Venezuela. 2026. Military abduction of President Maduro

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Why Latin America?

- Lithium triangle (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile)
- Copper (Chile and Peru – 40% world production)
- Nickel and rare metals
- Agricultural power (NB EU – MERCOSUR)
- Oil – Venezuela – one of the world's largest reserves

FTAA

- The US wanted to create the Free Trade Area of the Americas.
- 34 countries in a Free-Trade Area (an extension of NAFTA)
- The US did not want the emergence of MERCOSUR
- Failed mostly because of rejection by Brazil and Argentina
(see 2005 Mar del Plata Summit)

Final Thoughts

- Latin America has massive mineral, oil and agricultural resources, but, mostly due to US interference, has difficulty to form political, economic and industrial unity.
- The US will do everything it can to keep Latin America as a 'servant' of the USA, and will continue to try to overthrow any socialist government, especially if it threatens US companies with nationalisation.
- The USA will use military, diplomatic and financial force to keep Latin America dislocated to serve US interests