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Latin America Advisor

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FEATURED Q&A

What's the Impact of the Summit of the Americas Delay?



The 10th Summit of the Americas had been scheduled for next month in the Dominican Republic, but the country's government postponed the gathering, citing "deep differences of opinion."
// File Photo: xy via Adobe Stock.

Q The Dominican Republic's government announced on Nov. 3 that it would postpone the 2025 Summit of the Americas, citing "deep differences of opinion" amid tensions following recent U.S. military strikes on vessels in the Caribbean and along the Pacific coast. Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, host of CELAC and COP30 in Belém this month, earlier this month criticized the U.S. military's presence in the Caribbean and argued that hemispheric challenges should be addressed through diplomacy rather than force. What explains the reasons behind the postponement of the Summit of the Americas? What do Lula's comments signal about the future of regional cooperation, and does the region appear to be moving toward greater unity or deeper fragmentation? How might China react to this moment ahead of the next CELAC-China forum scheduled for 2028?

A Dan Restrepo, founding partner at Dinámica Americas: "Despite being trailblazers in multilateralism, boasting the world's oldest international organization, unity has long eluded the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Neither triennial meetings with the president of the United States, that is, Summits of the Americas, nor annual gatherings of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States have overcome vast differences to forge meaningful, common agendas. Given track records of failure, the utility of such forums has been diminishing for some time, a trend unlikely to reverse any time soon. Complicating matters further for the now-postponed 2025 Summit of the Americas, U.S. President Donald Trump has demonstrated deep disdain for multilateral forums, preferring instead a transactional,

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TODAY'S NEWS

ECONOMIC

U.S. Removing Tariffs on Some Foods, Apparel From Region

The Trump administration is reportedly planning to remove tariffs on goods including coffee, bananas, beef and apparel from four Latin American countries.

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ECONOMIC

Jamaica Not Expected to Seek Aid for Hurricane Recovery: IMF

Jamaica is not expected to seek aid from the International Monetary Fund after Hurricane Melissa battered the country last month, said an IMF spokeswoman.

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BUSINESS

Canada to Fast-Track Second LNG Terminal

Canada will fast-track a proposed liquefied natural gas project as the government seeks to open a second major LNG facility, Prime Minister Mark Carney announced Thursday.

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Carney // File Photo: Canadian Government.

ECONOMIC NEWS

U.S. Removing Tariffs on Some Foods, Apparel From Region

The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump said Thursday that it plans to remove tariffs on products including coffee, bananas, beef and apparel from four Latin American nations, an unnamed senior administration official told reporters Thursday, Reuters reported. Framework agreements with Argentina, Ecuador, El Salvador and Guatemala are expected to be finalized within two weeks, the official said, adding that the administration expects retailers in the United States to pass the lower prices along to consumers. The Trump administration is expected to reach agreements with more countries by the end of the year, the official said. On Wednesday, U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the administration was seeking to lower prices on foodstuffs and other items. "You're going to see some substantial announcements over the next couple of days in terms of things we don't grow here in the United States, coffee being one of them, bananas, other fruits, things like that," Bessent said in an interview with Fox News. "That will bring prices down very quickly," he added. The White House released joint statements with the governments of the four Latin American countries saying those countries had made concessions that will benefit U.S. exporters and businesses. Among the commitments by the Latin American countries, the White House said Argentina will provide preferential access for U.S. products, including medicines, chemicals and machinery; Ecuador will fight illegal logging and remove or eliminate tariffs on goods including fruit, wine and wheat; El Salvador will streamline regulatory requirements for U.S. exports such as vehicles and automotive parts; and Guatemala will protect labor rights and refrain from imposing digital services taxes. U.S. tariffs on other imports not covered in the framework agreements will remain unchanged: 15 percent on goods from Ecuador and 10 percent for those from Argentina, El Salvador and

Guatemala, The Wall Street Journal reported. The tariff eliminations follow wins by Democratic candidates last week in the gubernatorial races in New Jersey and Virginia, as well as in the New York City mayoral election. All three Democratic candidates focused heavily on issues of affordability in their campaigns.

Jamaica Not Expected to Seek Hurricane Recovery Aid: IMF

Jamaica is not expected to request assistance from the International Monetary Fund as it recovers from Hurricane Melissa, IMF spokeswoman Julie Kozack announced Thursday, saying that the island nation has "buffers to finance the immediate disaster-related spending needs," Reuters reported. Jamaican authorities estimate the storm, which made landfall last month as a Category 5 hurricane, caused at least \$6 billion in direct damage to homes

“For the half of Jamaica that has not been affected, your productivity will have to increase right away.”

— Andrew Holness

and infrastructure in the country, according to the wire service. When also accounting for business disruption, total economic losses in Jamaica from Hurricane Melissa could eventually reach \$20 billion, which would be greater than last year's GDP, Moody's Ratings found in an analysis published last week. Insured losses from the storm in Jamaica totaled between \$3 billion and \$5 billion, according to the Moody's report. "Get the economy up and running right away. That is the only way we're going to be able to fund the recovery quickly," Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness told Parliament in an address on Nov. 4. "For the half of Jamaica that has not been affected, your productivity will have to increase right away," Holness added. Hurricane Melissa's

NEWS BRIEFS

Chileans Head to Polls Sunday for Presidential Election

Chileans are to cast ballots Sunday in the country's presidential election, in which voters are to select a successor to President Gabriel Boric, who is constitutionally barred from a consecutive second term. Left-wing candidate Jeannette Jara has been leading recent polls, but polls have shown no candidate with strong enough support to win the election outright without a need for a runoff on Dec. 14, Reuters reported.

Mexican Supreme Court Upholds \$2.6 Billion Tax Bill for Grupo Salinas

Mexico's Supreme Court on Thursday rejected an injunction challenging more than \$2.6 billion in tax debts owed to Mexico's government by Grupo Salinas, the television, retail and banking conglomerate owned by magnate Ricardo Salinas Pliego, the Associated Press reported. The high court vote was among the first major decisions reached since the new Supreme Court's term began Sept. 1 following judicial elections in June. Grupo Salinas said Thursday that it has not ruled out taking the tax case to international courts, the AP reported.

Ecopetrol Finalizes Deal to Buy Solar Plants From Norwegian Utility Firm

Colombian state-run energy company Ecopetrol on Thursday finalized an acquisition of seven solar energy projects in Colombia from Norwegian power utility firm Statkraft, Ecopetrol announced in a statement. The deal, valued at \$158 million, includes approximately 600 megawatts in continuous power capacity, centered around Statkraft's 130-megawatt-capacity Portón del Sol solar plant, which opened commercial operations last year.

most intense destruction was concentrated in the western part of Jamaica; at least 32 people in the country were killed as a direct result of the storm. Forty-three others were killed in Haiti, where the hurricane's outer bands caused intense flooding.

BUSINESS NEWS

BHP Liable for Compensation in Dam Disaster: Judge

BHP Group is liable for compensating hundreds of thousands of victims from a devastating 2015 dam collapse in Brazil, a judge in London ruled today, Bloomberg News reported. Approximately 620,000 Brazilians are seeking in excess of \$47 billion following the Fundão Dam collapse at an iron ore joint venture between BHP and Brazilian mining company Vale. The companies last year signed a \$30 billion settlement with Brazil's government. Nineteen people were killed in the disaster.

Canadian Gov't to Fast-Track Second LNG Terminal

Canada's government will designate a proposed liquefied natural gas project for fast-tracked permitting as the country hopes to open a second major LNG facility along the Pacific coastline, Prime Minister Mark Carney announced on Thursday, Reuters reported. The Ksi Lisims LNG terminal is operated by a consortium led by Houston-based Western LNG, with minority partners including Canadian gas producers and the Nisga'a First Nation, the Indigenous group that owns the land for the project. The proposed terminal site is located to the north of Shell's LNG Canada facility, which began operations earlier this year as Canada's first-ever large-scale LNG terminal. [Editor's note: See related [Q&A](#) in the July 18 issue of the weekly Energy Advisor.]

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bilateral approach to international relations. With a few notable exceptions, Brazil's President Lula being one, leaders throughout the hemisphere have recognized this and acquiesced to dealing with the United States one-on-one, leaving aside issues of regional concern. This is especially true given Trump's willingness to use the full range of U.S. power to cajole and coerce countries to advance current interests, regardless of long-term consequences. As a result, the United States has become an additional agent of fragmentation. China's interaction with countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, including through the next CELAC-China forum, is unlikely to serve as a catalyst of hemispheric unity. China too seeks to advance its interests—primarily commercial ones—transactionally, and leaders throughout the hemisphere, of all ideological stripes, have played along even as skepticism toward China rises in many corners of the region.”

A **Laura Carlsen, director of the Americas Program in Mexico City:** “The suspension of the Summit of the Americas is the latest and clearest example of the reaction against the Trump administration's active intervention to divide and conquer a region with a mind of its own. The United States established the summit in 1994 to build consensus around its strategies and, since then, it has always been a mirror for differences on key regional issues like the economic model, integration, left-right rifts and hegemonic ambitions. Now the Trump administration has gone beyond reflections to smash the mirror. The host, the Dominican Republic, cited ‘profound divergences that currently hinder productive dialogue in the Americas.’ Mexico and Colombia refused to attend. The United States has not only excluded Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua, but Venezuelan boats are under violent attack by U.S. armed forces in the Caribbean, and the Cuban people are being strangled

by U.S. sanctions. The illegal attacks in the Caribbean and Pacific, considered ‘extrajudicial executions’ by human rights experts under international law, have outraged and distanced many leaders, not only in Latin America. The ignominious death of the Summit of the Americas may not be the worst outcome of the U.S. chaos strategy. Much more is at stake. The United States also undermined the recent meeting between the European Union and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), a forum established for regional coordination without the presence of the hegemon, by dissuading Latin American and European Union leaders from attending (including prominent pushover, Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission, who canceled at the last minute). Only nine heads of states attended, and the CELAC nations ruled by the far-right ‘disassociated’ from significant articles in the final declaration. Trump dislikes multilateralism, but the strategy to torpedo all basis for common interests bodes ill for the entire region—including the United States.”

A **Arturo Sarukhan, former Mexican ambassador to the United States:** “The decision to postpone the summit reflects a pragmatic Dominican acknowledgment of hemispheric realities, most likely driven by an effort to ensure a high-participation forum under more stable regional and geopolitical conditions than those prevalent today. Citing ‘profound divergences that currently hinder productive dialogue in the Americas,’ it chose delay over dysfunction—a choice that should deserve measured respect. The postponement undoubtedly reveals deep fractures in Inter-American affairs: the militarization of the fight against transnational criminal organizations and the patently unlawful—under both international and U.S. legal norms—use of force; the resuscitation of what to many Latin American eyes looks like a reloaded ‘big stick’ and

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spheres-of-influence policy emanating from the White House; and sharp divisions made worse by nations providing succor to authoritarian regimes or resorting to Westphalian notions of national sovereignty solely when expedient, weaponizing asylum policy (as Mexico has done with Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia) based on purely ideological considerations. Liberal democratic norms need to be at the core of inter-American summitry; if not, the Inter-American Democratic Charter, born out of the 2001 summit and which the majority of the continent signed, is not worth the paper it's written on. To top it off, Latin America is gazing at its navel: the lack of bandwidth and appetite for collective engagement and foreign affairs means not only that the region is punching below its weight diplomatically, but it's not even getting up on the ring. Just witness the paltry participation in the most recent E.U.-CELAC summit, and add to that mix signals suggesting President Trump was unwilling to commit to attending. Holding a fractured summit where major leaders shun the proceedings would have been worse than postponement. Ultimately, the Dominicans made the best of an impossible situation. The question now isn't whether postponement was correct—it clearly was—but whether leaders can overcome their divisions to make a 2026 summit meaningful."

A **Alexander Main, director of international policy at Center for Economic and Policy Research:** "The cancellation of this year's Summit of the Americas is the symptom of a bigger headache for the region: the Trump administration's aggres-

sive effort to impose its will throughout the hemisphere, without regard for international law, national sovereignty or basic morals. U.S. sanctions, coercive tariffs and threats of all kinds have been deployed to further Trump's agenda. Now, as part of its war on so-called 'narco-terror,' the administration is militarizing the Caribbean on a scale unseen since the Cold War, and airstrikes have illegally blown to pieces dozens of civilians in alleged drug-running boats. Even more worryingly, the White House is considering attacking Venezuela based on the spurious allegation that Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro controls a major transnational drug cartel. Colombia could be next on the list following unsubstantiated administration claims that President Petro supports drug trafficking. Needless to say, Trump's unjustified and unhinged military campaign has generated much concern regionally, particularly among Caribbean countries who proudly refer to their region as a 'zone of peace.' It became obvious to the Dominican Republic and other countries that it would be impossible to hold a smooth, productive hemispheric summit in such a distressing context. Ironically, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, a long-time champion of the Summits of the Americas, is the chief promoter of the United States' escalating military operations. A further irony is that Trump and Rubio's uber-interventionist policies will surely convince more regional governments to deepen relations with a far more stable and reliable foreign power: the People's Republic of China."

The Advisor welcomes comments on its Q&A section. Readers can write editor Gene Kuleta.

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