



Written by [Paul Dragu](#) on September 10, 2025

Rand Paul Scolds Trump Admin Over Venezuelan Boat Strike

Another Republican from Kentucky is criticizing the Trump administration. Sen. Rand Paul is not happy that President Donald Trump ordered a boat said to be carrying gang members and drugs to the U.S. blown to pieces.

The Strike

When he announced the strike on his Truth Social account, Trump [said](#) the people on the boat had been “positively identified Tren de Aragua Narcoterrorists.” The U.S. has designated the gang a foreign terrorist organization. Trump said the boat was traveling on international waters toward America with illegal narcotics in tow. The strike killed the 11 people on board.



AP Images
Rand Paul

But Paul, ever a stickler for the law of the land, found some problems with this. “The recent drone attack on a small speedboat over 2,000 miles from our shore without identification of the occupants or the content of the boat is in no way part of a declared war, and defies our longstanding Coast Guard rules of engagement,” he [said](#) in a statement to *Newsweek*.

Paul’s comments to news outlets and on social media indicate he is skeptical the boat was carrying drugs — or at least two of the major drugs coming into the U.S. from south of the border. On Monday, [he told](#) a commenter on social media that Venezuela is a source not of fentanyl, but of cocaine, which it pushes “primarily over land to the Pacific Ocean.”

He’s also not convinced the boat was on its way to the U.S. “How is a boat with four outboard engines going to go 2,700 miles across the ocean? I think in more likelihood, these drugs were not even intended for the United States. It could have been for any of dozens of islands down there, if there were drugs,” he said, [according](#) to reports.

No Respect for Human Life

Paul also took issue with what he sees as Vice President J.D. Vance’s lack of respect for human life. Over the weekend, Vance [posted](#) on his X account that “killing cartel members who poison our fellow citizens is the highest and best use of our military.” Leftist commentator Brian Krassenstein responded to Vance, saying that killing civilian citizens of another nation was a war crime. Vance [shot back](#), “I don’t give a sh*t what you call it.” Paul [offered](#) his two cents on the exchange. He said, “What a despicable and thoughtless sentiment it is to glorify killing someone without a trial.”



Self-defense Justified

In response to someone who accused Paul of saying the military can't obliterate any threats unless they "drift into Chesapeake Bay," Paul [said](#), "I am agreeing that the US has the right to self defense of its ships anywhere, anytime. If the Venezuelan outboard craft had been attacking our ships, self-defense would have been warranted."

Another commenter brought up President Thomas Jefferson's actions against the Barbary Pirates, who attacked numerous American merchant ships around the turn of the 19th century, as justification for Trump's actions. [Paul said](#) the circumstances were different:

The Barbary pirates were attacking US ships and, of course, we were justified in defending ourselves. (Though Jefferson did come back to Congress and ask for authorization). But a speedboat 2700 miles from the US alleged to have drugs is not anything like the Barbary Pirates.

Vance supporters told the [Daily Mail](#) that Paul is a "hypocrite," because he backed President Barack Obama' killing of two hostages in a drone attack in 2015:

At the time, Paul said that the action took place in a war zone [where] there was no "due process" and defended Obama for "trying to do the right thing." "These people were in a war zone and probably got what was coming to them — the captors. Unfortunately some innocent people also died," he said. The source close to Vance decried Paul as a "hypocrite," and pointed out [that] "during his failed run for president [he] defended Obama droning American citizens without due process, but now is sticking up for foreign terrorists thanks to his debilitating case of Trump Derangement Syndrome."

Principle Over Party

It isn't likely Paul has contracted a case of the highly contagious TDS. Like his maverick Republican/libertarian Kentuckian counterpart in the U.S. House, Rep. Thomas Massie, Paul has a history of choosing principle over party. Also like Massie, he boasts one of the most constitutionally obedient records of anyone in Congress. Paul has accrued a [96% lifetime freedom score](#) in *The New American's* Freedom Index. And since he entered the Senate in 2011, he has been very consistent in his views that military action requires congressional approval.

He also criticized Trump for bombing Iran's nuclear sites without congressional approval. But then he [praised him](#) for pulling back and showing restraint. And he praised the president when he took action consistent with the supreme law of the land. "Unequivocal support for President Trump's rescission of overseas welfare to be sent overseas. The constitution requires that spending originate with Congress. The constitution is silent with regard to NOT spending money," [he said](#) Aug. 29.

Trump's lethal action against the Venezuelan boat triggered debate on Capitol Hill about presidential abuse of power. While the Democrats can't be taken seriously to oppose the strike on the basis of principle rather than politics, Paul is not the only Republican to be concerned. According to the *Washington Examiner*, there are others — but they don't want to be outed. The *Examiner* [quoted](#) a anonymous Republican who said, "I trust the president and the administration, but I don't like that



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we've been left in the dark. I hope we get some answers soon."

Part of Regime Change in Venezuela?

The strike intensified America's already tense relations with Venezuela, led by communist dictator Nicolás Maduro. "None of our differences justify a high-impact military conflict in South America," Maduro [said](#). The U.S. has positioned warships in the Caribbean and stationed 4,000 troops, reportedly to take down drug cartels. Maduro believes the buildup could lead to an invasion. He accused the U.S. of making up drug-trafficking allegations to justify its real agenda: regime change. He said he would defend his country's sovereignty.

For all his tyrannical faults and foibles, Maduro's allegation is rooted in precedent — lots of it. The U.S. has a long history of regime-change operations in Latin America in the 20th century. We worked to bring about regime changes in Guatemala, Cuba, Argentina, Brazil Chile, El Salvador, and [more](#).

And no administration has ever informed the American people when their government was conducting regime-change operations. So even if that's what really happening here, what are the chances the White House would admit it?

It also just so happens that Venezuela is allied with China and Russia, two key nations on the other side of the power scale of the emerging multipolar world. Back in May, Maduro [struck energy and economic deals](#) with Russia. And in June, Venezuela [signed](#) new oil agreements with China to offset U.S. sanctions.



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