



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on November 4, 2025

Report: U.S. Planning War Against Cartels Inside Mexico, As Navy Threatens Venezuela

The Trump administration plans to send the military into Mexico to smash the drug cartels, as he promised he would during his campaign for the White House.

The report from NBC News, which cited “current and former” officials, said final details are yet to be worked out, and that special forces on the ground inside the narcotics kingdom would visit death from above upon the cartels with drones. Training for the mission has begun.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum denied that U.S. forces would enter the country.



AP Images

A move to fight the cartels inside Mexico would expand the administration’s war against cartels. The military has repeatedly destroyed what it claims were Venezuelan drug boats headed for the United States. A massive Navy flotilla is in the Caribbean, an apparent threat to the corrupt regime of dictator Nicolás Maduro.

NBC News Exclusive:

Trump administration is planning new mission in Mexico against cartels, current and former U.S. officials say.

IO’s on the ground? Military? Details via [@ckubeNBC](#) [@glubold](#) [@dandeluce](#)
<https://t.co/ocVVddsJUt>

— Tom Winter (@Tom_Winter) [November 3, 2025](#)

Details

NBC’s revelations about the missions are hardly a surprise. On Day 1 of his administration, [Trump declared](#) the cartels as terrorist organizations that “have engaged in a campaign of violence and terror throughout the Western Hemisphere that has not only destabilized countries with significant importance for our national interests but also flooded the United States with deadly drugs, violent criminals, and vicious gangs.”

In February, the [State Department published](#) a list of cartels so designated.

In August, *The New York Times* revealed, [he ordered](#) the military to plan for war against the cartels, news that surfaced a day after U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi announced a \$50 million reward for information leading to the arrest of Venezuelan strongman Maduro.



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□ The U.S. has officially declared the following as Foreign Terrorist Organizations: Tren de Aragua, MS-13, the Sinaloa Cartel, the Jalisco New Generation Cartel, the United Cartels, the Gulf Cartel, the Northeast Cartel, and the Michoacán Family.

pic.twitter.com/cgcw9juyEl

— Rapid Response 47 (@RapidResponse47) [February 19, 2025](#)

Thus, the plan NBC disclosed appears to be the third stage in Trump's plan to wipe out the cartels, as Border Czar [Tom Homan promised](#). He vowed that Trump would "wipe [the cartels] off the face of the earth."

"The early stages of training for the potential mission, which would include ground operations inside Mexico, has already begun, the two current U.S. officials said," [NBC reported](#):

But a deployment to Mexico is not imminent, the two U.S. officials and one of the former U.S. officials said. Discussions about the scope of the mission are ongoing, and a final decision has not been made, the two current U.S. officials said.

The U.S. troops, many of whom would be from Joint Special Operations Command, would operate under the authority of the U.S. intelligence community, known as Title 50 status, the two current officials said. They said officers from the CIA also would participate.

Once the mission begins, NBC reported, the administration will not publicize its actions.

"U.S. troops in Mexico would mainly use drone strikes to hit drug labs and cartel members and leaders, the two current U.S. officials and two former U.S. officials said," the [network reported](#):

Some of the drones that special forces would use require operators to be on the ground to use them effectively and safely, the officials said.

NBC News reported in April that the Trump administration was considering launching drone strikes on drug cartels in Mexico. Trump administration officials are still debating precisely how aggressive to be in Mexico as part of its fight against drug cartels, according to the two former U.S. officials and another former administration official with knowledge of the effort.

Not Happening

For her part, Sheinbaum said no such military action is forthcoming, the [Guardian reported](#).

Mexico has "no information" about it, "although she admitted that in phone calls with Trump, the US president had offered to send troops and other support to confront organized crime," the website explained:

"I've always said thank you very much, President Trump. But no, Mexico is a free, independent and sovereign country," Sheinbaum said.

Today she said that such an operation "won't happen," [Reuters reported](#).

That might be wishful thinking.

Trump has said Sheinbaum and Mexican officials don't rule the country. "I have great respect for the



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president, a woman that I think is a tremendous woman,” [Trump said](#) in October. Still, he said, “Mexico is run by the cartels.”

Venezuelan Drug Boats, Navy Flotilla

As administration officials have been planning the strikes inside Mexico, those against the alleged Venezuelan drug boats have continued.

On November 1, War Secretary Pete Hegseth announced that yet another boat was hit with a kinetic strike, this one in the Caribbean Sea.

“This vessel — like EVERY OTHER — was known by our intelligence to be involved in illicit narcotics smuggling, was transiting along a known narco-trafficking route, and carrying narcotics,” Hegseth said:

Three male narco-terrorists were aboard the vessel during the strike, which was conducted in international waters. All three terrorists were killed, and no U.S. forces were harmed in this strike.

These narco-terrorists are bringing drugs to our shores to poison Americans at home — and they will not succeed. The Department will treat them EXACTLY how we treated Al-Qaeda. We will continue to track them, map them, hunt them, and kill them.

Strikes destroyed alleged drug boats on October 29, 27, 24, 22, and 21.

CNN reported that 15 strikes have destroyed 16 boats.

Today, at the direction of President Trump, the Department of War carried out a lethal kinetic strike on another narco-trafficking vessel operated by a Designated Terrorist Organization (DTO) in the Caribbean.

This vessel—like EVERY OTHER—was known by our intelligence to be...

pic.twitter.com/W7xqeMpSUi

— Secretary of War Pete Hegseth (@SecWar) [November 2, 2025](#)

Earlier today, at the direction of President Trump, the Department of War carried out a lethal kinetic strike on yet another narco-trafficking vessel operated by a Designated Terrorist Organization (DTO) in the Eastern Pacific.

This vessel, like all the others, was known by our... pic.twitter.com/mBOLA5RYQe

— Secretary of War Pete Hegseth (@SecWar) [October 29, 2025](#)

As well, Trump might launch operations against Venezuela to destabilize the Maduro regime, which the [Trump administration says](#) controls the Tren De Aragua terror gang. A [former CIA official told](#) the *Miami Herald* the same thing.

A Navy flotilla is now stationed in the Caribbean near Venezuela, [The Washington Post reported](#) last week. It includes the [USS Gerald R. Ford carrier group](#), along with the [USS Iwo Jima](#), an amphibious assault ship, three guided missile destroyers, two guided missile cruisers, a nuclear attack submarine,



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and multiple fighters and other aircraft.



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