

Resolving Puerto Rico's Territory Status Will Strengthen U.S. National Security

PUERTO RICO'S CONTRIBUTIONS AND SERVICE TO U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY

- Puerto Rico has been a U.S. territory for over 126 years, and its residents have been U.S. citizens for 108 years.
- Puerto Ricans have proudly served in all U.S. wars and conflicts since World War I and under all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces.
- In 2016, the 65th Infantry Regiment "*Borinqueneers*" were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for their exemplary service as the only Hispanic segregated unit during the Korean War.
- Puerto Rico plays a strategic and critical role for the U.S.' standing throughout the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region, and America's transportation and power projection capacity in the Atlantic.
- Puerto Rico's capacity for near shore advanced manufacturing, cutting edge scientific research, the aerospace industry, and its current and former military installations, demonstrates the island's geopolitical importance for the U.S.

GROWING INFLUENCE OF AMERICA'S INTERNATIONAL ADVERSARIES IN LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

- U.S. Military and State Department officials are concerned that foreign adversaries, such as China and Russia, are establishing global logistics and basing infrastructure in our hemisphere to project military power, as well as making efforts to grow their political and economic influence in the region.
- In August 2022, the Russian Ministry of Defense organized military games in Venezuela that included participation by China, Iran, and twelve other countries to increase military ties, grow networks, and normalize an increasingly visible and active military role by those countries in the LAC region.
- In June 2023, it was revealed that China has negotiated with Cuba to grow their military intelligence and training operations in that country to spy on and challenge America's role in the world. China is also undertaking massive investments in the region to lure countries into debt trap colonialism.
- In January 2025, Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro called for an invasion of Puerto Rico to "liberate" the island from U.S. control.

RESOLVING PUERTO RICO'S POLITICAL STATUS WILL COUNTER INFLUENCE FROM INTERNATIONAL ADVERSARIES

- Puerto Rico's geostrategic location in the center of the Caribbean serves as America's principal military and economic outpost in the LAC region. As global threats to America continue to evolve closer to home, we cannot afford to keep Puerto Rico under an outdated, weak, and failed territory status.
- Despite Puerto Rico's history of being a critical asset to America's defense and the honorable sacrifices of Puerto Rican service members, the island remains underdeveloped and underutilized because of its unequal and undemocratic status as a U.S. territory.
- Congress has plenary power to resolve Puerto Rico's political status and end America's oldest and largest colony.
- Passing legislation to end Puerto Rico's territory status and enable a binding path towards statehood will strengthen the Island as well as America's global strategic position.
- Statehood for Puerto Rico would show China, LAC, and the world that America lives up to its values of democracy, and that we are a strong and growing nation with a permanent presence in the LAC region.
- Puerto Rico can help America strengthen its military, economic, political, and diplomatic standing.



Puerto Rico Statehood Council

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