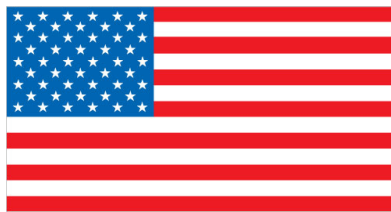


United States

United States of America



Key Facts



OAS Membership Date: 30 April 1948

Head of State / Head of Government: President Donald J Trump

Capital city: Washington, DC

Population: 329,256,465

Language(s): English only 78.2%, Spanish 13.4%, Chinese 1.1%, other 7.3%

Religions: Protestant 46.5%, Roman Catholic 20.8%, Jewish 1.9%, Mormon 1.6%, other Christian 0.9%, Muslim 0.9%, Jehovah's Witness 0.8%, Buddhist 0.7%, Hindu 0.7%, other 1.8%, unaffiliated 22.8%

Ethnic Groups: white 72.4%, black 12.6%, Asian 4.8%, Amerindian and Alaska native 0.9%, native Hawaiian and other Pacific islander 0.2%, other 6.2%, two or more races 2.9%

Currency: United States dollar (USD)

Gross domestic product (PPP): \$19.49 trillion (2017 est.)

Legal System: common law system based on English common law at the federal level; state legal systems based on common law except Louisiana, which is based on Napoleonic civil code; judicial review of legislative acts

Political system: The United States is a constitutional federal republic. The president and vice president are indirectly elected on the same ballot by the Electoral College of 'electors' chosen from each state and are elected for one 4-year term, with eligibility for a second term. The Cabinet is appointed by the President and appointed by the Senate. The bicameral Congress consists of: the Senate (100 seats, with 2 members directly elected in each of the 50 states by simple majority vote, serving 6-year terms with one-third of all Senators up for re-election every 2 years) and the House of Representatives (435 seats, with members directly elected in an electoral district within a state by simple majority vote, serving two-year terms). There is one high judicial body: the Supreme Court, consisting of 9 judges (one chief justice and

eight associate justices). The president nominates and, with the advice and consent of the Senate, appoints Supreme Court justices; justices serve for life.

Economy: The United States has the most technologically powerful economy in the world; US firms are at or near the forefront in technological advances, especially in computers, pharmaceuticals, and medical, aerospace, and military equipment. In a 2014 comparison of GDP by purchasing power parity (PPP), the US economy, having stood as the largest in the world for more than a century, slipped into second place behind China, whose economy has experienced rapid growth in the past four decades. By virtue of its standing as the dominant world power, the United States has remained a major participant in the global economy and a financier of international initiatives and organizations; it is the second largest exporting nation in the world (behind China), with capital goods and industrial supplies making up the largest portion of exports, and is the largest financial contributor to the United Nations, providing over one-fifth of the organization's budget. Following the effects of the 2008 Recession, however, the US has observed a trend of anti-globalization sentiment; President Donald Trump, whose administration has implemented protectionist trade policy in the form of increased tariffs and the withdrawal of the US from multilateral free-trade agreements such as the North Atlantic Free Trade Association (NAFTA) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Imported oil accounts for more than 50% of US consumption, and oil has a major impact on the overall health of the economy; the majority of US oil imports come from Canada, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Venezuela, and Nigeria. Long-term problems for the US include stagnation of wages for lower-income families, inadequate investment in deteriorating infrastructure, rapidly rising medical and pension costs of an aging population, energy shortages, and sizable budget deficits.

Diplomatic Relations

Relations with the OAS: The United States is a founding member of the OAS, having signed the Organization's Charter of 1948 in Bogota, Colombia with the hope that the new alliance would protect the Western Hemisphere against the spread of communism. The OAS is headquartered in Washington, DC, and the United States supplies more than 60% of the organization's annual budget. The Trump administration has been nominally friendly towards the OAS, calling it an "enduring organization for the promotion of democracy, security, human rights, and economic development". However, the United States' 2018 contribution to the OAS budget was \$8.5 million shy of the amount required by the organization, and President Trump's stances on immigration, trade, and Cuba have been subjects of concern for many Latin American leaders. These circumstances may decrease the influence that the United States currently possesses within the OAS, as well as result in deterioration of bilateral relations between the US and other OAS member states. The most salient example of the latter is the US' newly strained relations with Mexico as a result of the controversial proposed construction of a wall along the border between the two nations.

Relations with Venezuela: The United States established diplomatic relations with Venezuela in 1835, four years after the state formed following the dissolution of Gran Colombia. Relations have traditionally been characterized by an important commercial relationship between the two countries and collaboration over combatting the production and transit of illegal drugs. However, since the election of socialist Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez in 1999, tensions have gradually risen between the two nations. The Chavez administration's maintenance of economic ties with Cuba, failure to follow through on regional counternarcotic and counterterrorism efforts, and consistent criticism of the United States on the world stage resulted in the US implementation of sanctions on Venezuelan individuals, the enforcement of visa restrictions against Venezuelan officials found guilty of human rights violations, and the breaking of diplomatic ties between the two nations in 2010. Currently, the United States recognizes Juan Guaido as the interim president of Venezuela and refuses President Nicolas Maduro's claim to legitimacy, and

President Trump has asserted that he is “not going to rule out a military option” in regards to addressing the Venezuelan crisis. Along with Colombia and Brazil, the United States has amassed hundreds of tons of medical and food aid along the Venezuelan border, which Maduro’s government refuses to let into the country. Despite the circumstances of the crisis, the United States remains Venezuela’s largest trading partner, with bilateral trade totaling \$16 billion in 2016. However, these relations are considerably strained due to the extreme insecurity of the Venezuelan economy and the United States’ ardent opposition to the Maduro government. The United States is a supporter of the Lima Group, a multilateral coalition of Latin American governments with the goal of establishing a peaceful exit to the Venezuelan crisis.