

1. Us Strikes on Venezuela – International Relation

The US strikes on Venezuela have brought to the forefront concerns over violations of international law, breach of national sovereignty & reinforcing perceptions of U.S. imperialism. However, data shows that the U.S. attack on Venezuela is unlikely to have any direct impact on India's energy security.

Probable Reasons for a U.S. Attack on Venezuela

Strategic Control over Global Energy Resources – Venezuela possesses the world's largest proven crude oil reserves, estimated at nearly 18% of global reserves, exceeding those of Saudi Arabia, Russia, and the United States individually. Venezuelan reserves are predominantly extra-heavy crude, located in the Orinoco Belt, which gives long-term strategic value despite current production constraints. Control or influence over Venezuela enhances U.S. leverage in global oil pricing, supply security, and OPEC dynamics, especially during periods of geopolitical instability in West Asia and Eastern Europe.

Countering China's Expanding Footprint in Latin America – China, the world's largest crude oil importer, has emerged as the principal buyer of Venezuelan oil, often through barter arrangements and debt-backed oil supplies. Venezuela has become a critical node in China's energy security architecture, linking Latin America to Beijing's global influence strategy. From a U.S. strategic perspective, weakening Venezuela's alignment with China helps contain China's near-abroad expansion in the Western Hemisphere, traditionally viewed by the U.S. as its strategic backyard.

U.S. Energy Diplomacy and Trade Commitments – The U.S. has entered into long-term petroleum and LNG supply commitments with allies such as the European Union, Japan, South Korea, and the United Kingdom. However, the U.S. faces structural constraints

1. Limited spare crude capacity relative to global demand surges
2. Refinery mismatches for certain crude grades

Gaining influence over Venezuelan crude flows could help the U.S. balance export commitments, stabilise allied energy markets, and maintain credibility as a global energy supplier.

Revival of the Monroe Doctrine – The U.S. has justified actions in Latin America as being consistent with the Monroe Doctrine, which asserts U.S. primacy in the Western Hemisphere. In contemporary terms, this doctrine is being reinterpreted to

1. Block extra-regional powers (China, Russia, Iran)
2. Preserve U.S. strategic dominance in Latin America

The narrative aligns with a broader great-power competition framework, rather than classical ideological interventionism alone.

Other Stated and Unstated Motives

Allegations of state-sponsored drug trafficking, particularly involving transnational narcotics networks
Containment of socialist and anti-U.S. political ideology, which challenges U.S. influence in the region

Migration pressures

1. Venezuela's economic collapse has triggered mass migration
2. Secondary migration flows affect U.S. borders via Central America

Domestic political signalling within the U.S., especially during election cycles, projecting strength in foreign policy

Venezuela's Share in Global Oil Supply– Venezuela is a member of Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which collectively dominates global oil markets. Despite vast reserves, Venezuela currently contributes

1. Around 3.5% of OPEC's total oil exports

2. Roughly 1% of global oil supply

Key constraints on production

1. Long-standing U.S. sanctions restricting finance, technology, and shipping
2. Heavy crude requiring specialised refineries, limiting the pool of potential buyers

As a result, China absorbs the bulk of Venezuelan exports, reinforcing geopolitical sensitivities for Washington.

Impact Analysis on India

Oil Imports and Energy Security- India imported USD 255.3 million worth of crude oil from Venezuela in FY 2024–25, constituting only about 0.3% of India's total crude imports. Since 2019, India has systematically reduced oil imports from Venezuela in compliance with U.S. sanctions, shifting towards suppliers in West Asia, Russia, and Africa. Consequently, short-term disruptions in Venezuela do not pose a material risk to India's energy security.

Bilateral Trade Impact- India–Venezuela trade has sharply contracted Imports in 2024–25– USD 364.5 million, down 81.3% from USD 1.4 billion in 2023–24. Crude oil constituted USD 255.3 million of these imports. India's exports stood at USD 95.3 million, dominated by pharmaceutical products (USD 41.4 million) Given the limited trade volume and sanctions-induced constraints, economic spillovers for India remain negligible.

Strategic and Diplomatic Implications- India has traditionally followed a non-interventionist, sovereignty-respecting foreign policy, making direct involvement unlikely. The situation underscores India's vulnerability to secondary sanctions, reinforcing the need for diversified energy and trade partnerships.

Way Forward for India

The U.S. action comes amid India's active diversification of its crude basket and ongoing Indo–U.S. trade negotiations. If sanctions on Venezuela are relaxed

1. Venezuelan heavy crude could provide additional flexibility to Indian refiners
2. It could help reduce supply concentration risks in India's import profile

In the emerging global order

1. Competition over raw materials, energy, and strategic resources is likely to intensify
2. Resource geopolitics will increasingly drive conflicts and alignments

Therefore, India must

1. Preserve strategic autonomy in foreign and energy policy
2. Avoid arrangements that undermine long-term sovereignty or national interest
3. Secure diversified access to critical raw materials and energy resources without succumbing to geopolitical pressure

Source- <https://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/venezuelan-situation-to-have-negligible-impact-on-indias-energy-security-data-shows/article70470318.ece>