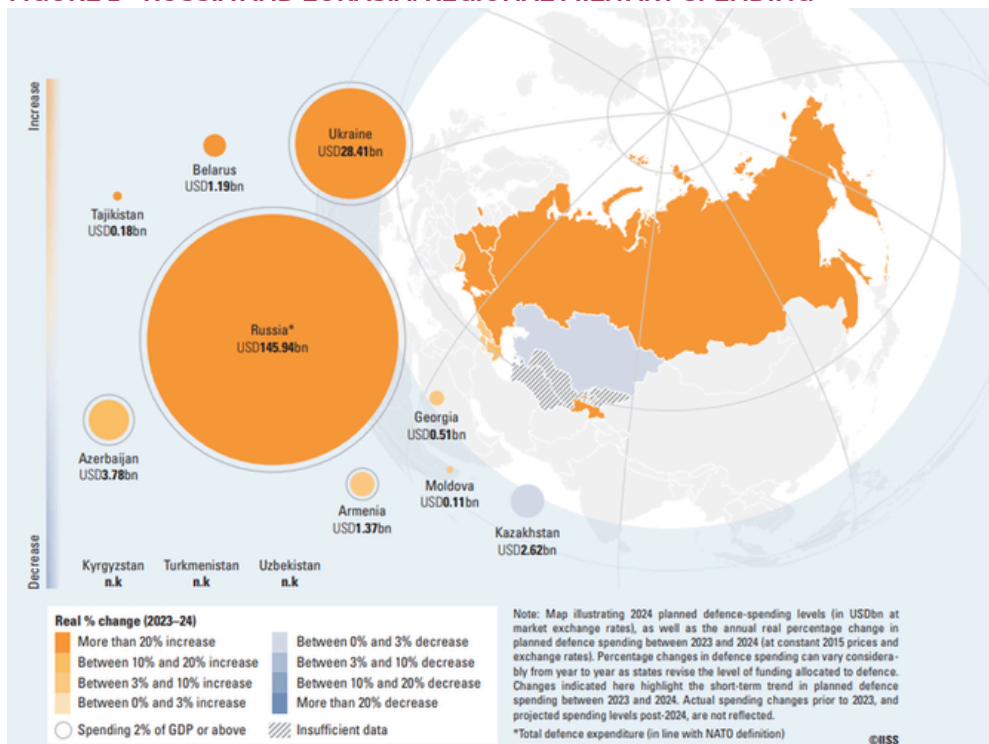


DEFENSE AND SECURITY RELATIONS: Venezuela-Russia

RUSSIA: DEFENSE AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

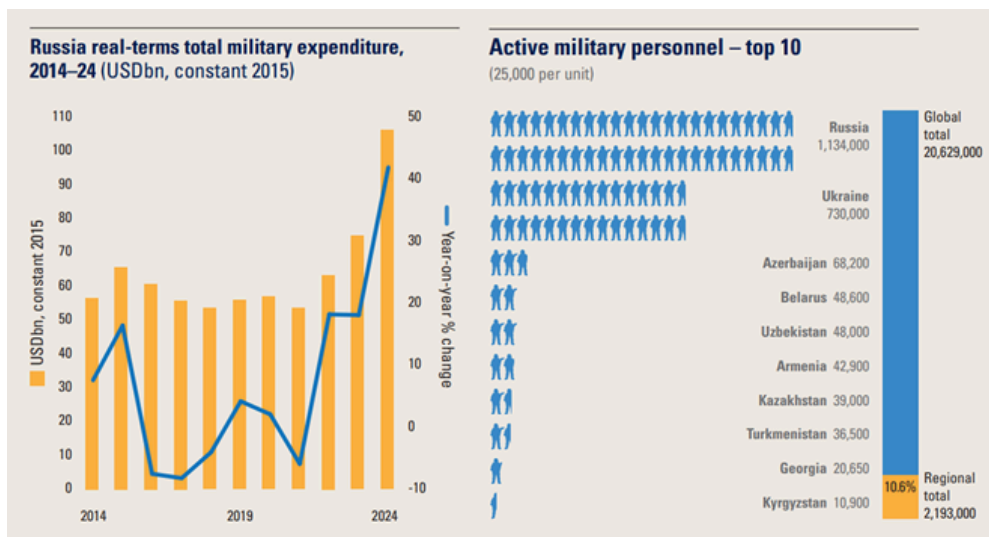
The Russian Federation remains one of the world's leading military powers, supported by high levels of defense spending, a vast conventional and nuclear arsenal, and a historically well-established military-industrial complex. The war in Ukraine has significantly reoriented the country's strategic priorities, intensifying the mobilization of its defense industry and expanding state military efforts. At the same time, international sanctions imposed since 2022 have restricted Russia's access to traditional markets, supply chains, and sensitive technologies, prompting a search for new partners and spheres of influence outside the Western bloc.

FIGURE 1 - RUSSIA AND EURASIA: REGIONAL MILITARY SPENDING



Source: The Military Balance 2025

FIGURE 2 - MILITARY EXPENDITURES AND ARMED FORCES OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION



Source: The Military Balance 2025

RUSSIA'S GLOBAL POSITION

- 3rd highest military spending in the world
- 6.7% of GDP allocated to defense (2024)
- A budget close to Europe's combined military spending
- A military power currently engaged in armed conflict

ARMED FORCES AND CAPABILITIES

- Numerically large armed forces
- Arsenal inherited from the USSR and modernized
- Emphasis on missiles, air defense, and hybrid warfare

DEFENSE INDUSTRY

- Industrial mobilization for the war effort
- Direct impact of international sanctions
- Decline in exports in recent years
- Search for alternative markets outside the Western bloc

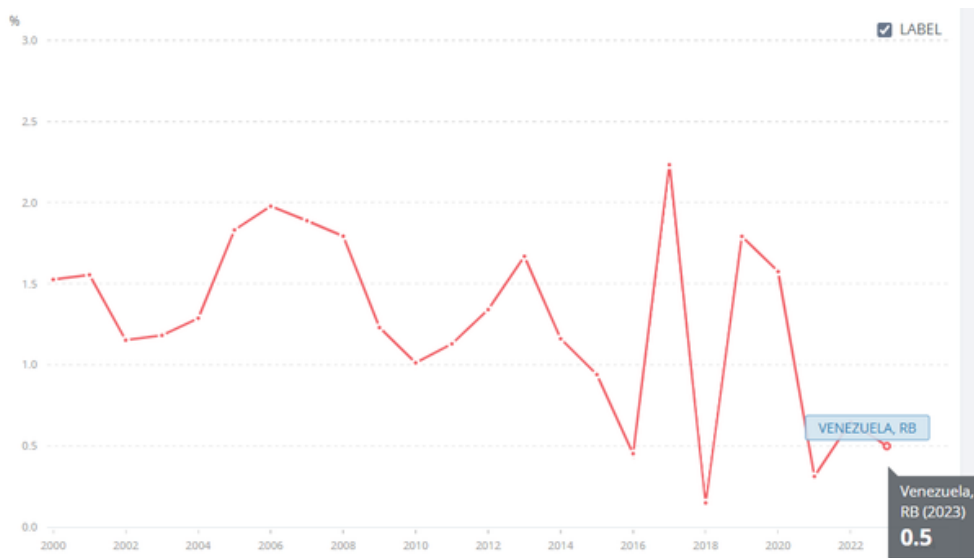
DEFENSE AND SECURITY RELATIONS: Venezuela-Russia



VENEZUELA: DEFENSE AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Venezuela's defense policy is structured around the Bolivarian National Armed Forces (FANB), which consists of the Army, Navy, Air Force, National Guard, and Bolivarian Militia, under the coordination of the Ministry of Popular Power for Defense and the Strategic Operational Command. The military doctrine emphasizes comprehensive defense, combining conventional capabilities, popular mobilization, and expanded functions of internal security, national development, and regime protection in response to external pressures, sanctions, and regional instability.

FIGURE 3 - VENEZUELA'S MILITARY EXPENDITURES (% OF GDP, 2010–2023)



Source: World Bank Group Data

VENEZUELA'S GLOBAL POSITION

- Regional military power in relative decline
- Heavy reliance on extra-regional partners
- Defense spending estimated at 0.5% of GDP (2023)
- Emphasis on territorial defense and the political system
- Politically mobilized armed forces

STRUCTURE OF THE BOLIVARIAN NATIONAL ARMED FORCES (FANB)

- Bolivarian Army
- Bolivarian Navy
- Bolivarian Air Force
- Bolivarian National Guard
- Bolivarian Militia
- Coordination: Ministry of the People's Power for Defense and Strategic Operational Command

DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASE

- Centralization at CAVIM
- Production of small arms, ammunition, and explosives
- Limited technological capacity
- Restricted access to international supplies
- Focus on maintenance and adaptation

DEFENSE AND SECURITY RELATIONS: Venezuela-Russia

RUSSIA AND VENEZUELA: DEFENSE AND SECURITY RELATIONS

Defense relations between Venezuela and Russia constitute Moscow's deepest and most structured military partnership in Latin America in the post-Cold War era. Consolidated beginning in the 2000s under Hugo Chávez, these relations took on a strategic, ideological, and operational character, encompassing the supply of heavy weaponry, technical training, maintenance, and international political support. For Russia, Venezuela represents a forward base for geopolitical projection in the Western Hemisphere. For Caracas, Moscow is the main military pillar in the face of sanctions and diplomatic isolation. Bilateral cooperation goes beyond a commercial model, approaching a relationship of structural dependence.

Venezuela Imports from Russia

- Sukhoi fighter jets (Su-30)
- Mi-17 / Mi-35 helicopters
- S-300 systems
- T-72 tanks
- BMP vehicles
- Artillery and missiles

Russian Strategic Interests

- Military presence in the Caribbean
- Indirect containment of the United States
- Consolidation of anti-hegemonic allies
- Arms exports
- Political and diplomatic expansion

FIGURE 5 - LIST OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT TRANSACTIONS BETWEEN VENEZUELA AND RUSSIA

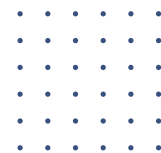
| Year | System | Quantity | Type |
|------|--------|----------|--------------|
| 2006 | AK-103 | 100.000+ | Rifles |
| 2008 | Su-30 | 24 | Fighter jets |
| 2009 | S-300 | 1 system | Air defense |
| 2011 | T-72 | 92 | Tanks |
| 2013 | Mi-35 | 10+ | Helicopters |

Source: Compiled by the author based on SIPRI data

BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

- [Agreement on Technical-Military Cooperation \(2007\)](#)
- [Protection of Intellectual Property Related to Technical-Military Cooperation \(2009\)](#)

DEFENSE AND SECURITY RELATIONS: Venezuela-Russia



SUMMARY OF THE REPORT



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BASED ON DEPENDENCE: Institutionalized and characterized by Venezuela's strong structural dependence on Moscow.



IDEOLOGICAL ALIGNMENT: Anti-hegemonic political convergence that reinforces partnership as a means of resisting international isolation.



OPERATIONAL CENTRALITY: Russia serves as the primary supplier of critical systems, ensuring the functioning of the Venezuelan Armed Forces.

LIMITS OF THE RELATIONSHIP



ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY: Venezuela's fiscal fragility undermines investments in modernization and hinders deeper cooperation.



IMPACT OF SANCTIONS: Sanctions hinder access to parts, financing, and services, directly affecting the sustainability of Russian equipment.



TECHNOLOGICAL DEPENDENCE: The lack of an independent industrial base hinders the development of domestic capabilities and perpetuates dependence on foreign sources.

FUTURE PROSPECTS



STRENGTHENING THE ALLIANCE: Given the lack of strategic alternatives, this partnership is likely to remain a central pillar of Venezuela's defense policy.



FOCUS ON MAINTENANCE: Cooperation should focus on the preservation and limited modernization of existing systems.



CONDITIONAL COOPERATION: New projects will depend on developments regarding sanctions, the domestic economic situation, and Russia's logistical capabilities.