

Colombia and US resolve deportation dispute, avoid trade war



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Colombia has agreed to allow US military flights carrying deported migrants to land in the country, averting a potential trade war with the US. Tensions began when President Gustavo Petro blocked two US military planes carrying Colombians deported from the US, citing concerns over the treatment of migrants. The Trump administration retaliated by threatening tariffs on Colombian goods, escalating the dispute.

Initially, Petro signaled a willingness to impose tariffs on US goods, but after diplomatic talks, the US and Colombia reached a resolution. The White House announced that Colombia would accept deported migrants “without limitation or delay,” praising the agreement as a victory for Trump’s hard-line immigration stance. Tariffs were put on hold, though the threat remains if Colombia fails to uphold the terms.

The spat flared when Petro criticized the treatment of deported migrants, particularly those on military flights, after a video showed deportees from the US to Brazil being handcuffed. Petro insisted that no Colombian should be returned in such conditions. In response, Trump labeled Petro’s actions as a national security threat, demanding a 25% tariff on Colombian imports, escalating to 50% if Colombia didn’t comply.

After behind-the-scenes negotiations, Colombia’s Foreign Minister Luis Gilberto Murillo confirmed the resolution. Although trade tariffs were avoided, the US maintained some visa restrictions on Colombian officials and imposed increased scrutiny on Colombian arrivals in the US. This diplomatic resolution comes at a time of strained US-Colombia relations, historically centered around anti-drug cooperation. The trade relationship between the two nations, valued at \$53.5 billion in 2022, is crucial, with Colombian exports like oil, coffee, and flowers benefiting US consumers.

