

Latin American bicentennials and strategic thinking in the 21st Century

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Summary

The following work presents the major challenges of the international agenda for these Latin American Bicentennial times of independences that demands an authentic strategic thinking from our reality and with an originality which does not derivates from models from other continents.

Globalization is inseparable from the regionalization processes to balance its effects and to achieve a world that leads to an International Community far away from all Unilateralism. This requires a compromised analytical vision located in a space: ours, of the South American Continent.

Introduction

The world is changing. Globalization as a phenomenon and historical process has an unprecedented speed. The present time must be thought of as a problematic time of the experience of a world in a state of transition to multipolarity. The limits between world, regional and national politics are increasingly blurred. The limits of their spheres become weak forming a triple dialectical relationship between the local, regional and global.

In this second millennium (under Western parameters), the bicentennials of the different declarations of independence are happening throughout South America, the peoples of the Spanish Viceroyalties lived a process of *Balkanization*, three Viceroyalties and a General Captaincy were transformed into nine Republics: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. Unlike Brazil, with a totally different historical development on its territory.

In the 19th century a process of clashes took place between "Liberals" and "Conservatives", which ended in the subjection of the new states in quasi neocolonies of the main hegemon of that century: *The British Empire*. It was the British Empire that inserts us to "*their*" world, with the *International Labor Division* as suppliers / producers of raw materials and cheap food and buyers of manufactured products with high added value. Introducing, on par with our entry into the "*world market*" economic theories that endorsed the process, momentarily beneficial for some of the new countries.

On the other hand, it was that same Great Power, which fostered the clashes that ended in tremendous wars between South Americans (War of the Triple Alliance: Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay against Paraguay or the Pacific War: Chile against Bolivia and Peru), for a side, while on the other, through financial loans and the International Labor Division that we have already indicated, generated sophisticated control mechanisms for the countries in conflict.

Well, the main idea of this work is to recognize that when America got rid of the Spanish Century XIX yoke and tried to have a different destiny as South American peoples, **Strategic Thinking** lacked in the elites that took power in replacement of the Colonial administration, and that later in the twentieth century, in the middle of the two World Wars was when the countries of the region (especially Argentina and Brazil) initiated strong processes of industrialization and import substitution applying, effectively, a Strategic and Geopolitical Thought that gave great results.

For example, it is noteworthy to mention that Juan Perón who, in a conference of a reserved nature in the National War School, during the month of November 1953 said: "*we have to break the strategy of the arc that goes from Rio to Santiago and create a new for South America*".

Consequently, given the Geopolitical changes and the New World Order in conformation that is given cause of the clashes between the Countries that we denominate: Atlantists against Continentalists. *We are going through this first quarter of the 21st Century with a new possibility of rescuing and re defining an authentic Strategic and Geopolitical Thought for our Continent Island: South America ;*

What we will develop next:

Development of the analysis

"We must recognize from 2001, the reappearance the criterion of geopolitical and geostrategic tensions in international conflicts."

For this we must break with mental structures and paradigms that were imposed on us as revealed truths and have that critical and practical thinking, in order to obtain enough freedom of thought to design our own state policies and not be mere spectators of global changes. But for this we must start from a serious international analysis and based on concrete hypotheses in order to have that critical strategic thinking of our own.

Never before was so obvious that every good political or national and regional strategy begins and depends on a successful knowledge and sensible interpretation of international board that is inserted and lives each country.

In this regard, the first thing that is found is that, since human life has existed, relations between peoples (inter families, clans, tribes, fiefs, nations or whatever) have been ruled by force. And, even if some interested analysts want to make us believe that there are good powers, and bad powers, or that talking about imperialism is a "*populist*" classic, the reality shows that, even today, in international politics the strongest is the one that imposes its interests and their "*law*".

Briefly describing which are the Geopolitical and International Policy actors of the XXI Century, we can observe, prima facie, that the whole model of World Order created in the postwar period of the Second World War is outdated or needs a strong reform to continue to be up to the challenges of our times.

After the fall of the *iron curtain*, the end of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, the implosion of the Soviet Union in *fifteen new states* and

Yugoslavia in six others, after a brutal bloodshed, ethnic cleansing and massacres lived in the last 30 years; the world entered a brief period of hegemonic domination by the United States. History has shown, time again and again, that the world dominated by a hegemon is not sustainable over time and the terrorist attacks of September 11 2001 marked, as has been pointed out in other works, the beginning of the end of the Pax Americana. Note, in that sense, that the two wars that the United States fought against terrorism, in Afghanistan and Iraq, were both lost, marking the end of the era of the almighty American hegemon.

This allowed new players to come onto the geopolitical stage who had been asking for their space as Russia and China the first in the territories of the former Soviet Union and the second in the Pacific and Central Asia, first with regional pretensions and nowadays, with clearly global interests .

In this process called "*A New (North) American Century*", USA prioritized its superiority in the military, to achieve its objectives, not for the control of "space", as was the consequence of the Second World War, but for the geopolitical conquest of the "big markets" of both the suppliers of raw materials and of the consumption of the same. The Idea was always: "*Americanize the World without Globalizing the USA*".

This allowed that during the first ten years after the implosion of the USSR, the United States was, in all the planet, a hegemonic superpower in an indisputable way to the point that, in more than one region of the world, from Washington it was possible to draw the map of the countries that were going to survive and those destined to disappear. The *end of the story* was a real and everything was heading to a new world order, a unipolar one

This demanded that in the United States, the different administrations of Republicans or Democrats since the 1990s "*did not stop strongly increasing defense spending to face a globalized world and to modernize their armed forces to be at the height of this strategic plan to maintain its global supremacy*". USA that "republic of imperial character" seemed to reach the zenith of its power. But "*No empire is eternal*" with that thesis historian Paul Kennedy, in 2007, published a work in which he argued that the US began its decline.

The issue is when this decline will be felt and how that decline will be, if it will be a controlled and orderly decline as was the English? or chaotic as some empires that disappeared. Therefore, we maintain that this reduction of power of the global Hegemon forced the USA to retreat from many conflicting scenarios and strengthen their direct influence in their region. Which is none other than the entire American continent, which South and Latin America are in.

Therefore the movements that took place a decade ago are not strange in this context, the subcontinent must be return at USA political, economic and military influence, in this continental zone.

In that sense, it is important to study the objectives that the Southern Command abrogates for its area of influence, establishing military doctrines, supporting governments loyal to Washington and surrounding the hostile ones, since "their" area of National Security has been established from Central America and the Caribbean to a line that would be located , geographically speaking, in the Amazon River, thus delimiting an area that cannot be in the hands of its economic, political and military adversaries and more now with the new National Security directives of the administration Trump, that imposed that Russia and China as an enemy of the USA.

But how do the other international players of that board interact in permanent movements? Let's analyze:

China: continental Asiatic- Its Imperative is to expand and to maintain its level of growth and this definitely puts it on the big world board as the key piece that will with its movements unbalance, in the short term, the existing powers, since in that framework of sustained growth, one of its main international objectives is to establish itself as a center of gravity within a multipolar system. In addition to ensuring the supply of resources that it lacks. For this reason, the United States considers it to be the great danger to its global hegemony, and although it is too late to get rid of it, it will economically try, by all means at its disposal, to limit its advance and development.

China desires to diversify its sources of raw materials, China has made a strong investment bet on the "forgotten" African continent, which has put the USA on alert, more after China's agreement to develop the area of Darfur with its own infrastructure to obtain oil resources, to which the US responded by incorporating Sudan in the list of members of the Axis of Evil and for which it finances, it is worth saying, terrorist groups to overthrow the government of that country.

In addition to the concern of the USA strategists, China signed extensive agreements with Russia not only energy but also technological and military, and is also making an approach to India. At present, they established an agreement not to interpose in the area of energy resources, which would make one of the most important Economic Continental Spaces in this era of globalization.

On the other hand, the military doctrine of China has incorporated as conflict hypothesis a confrontation with the USA and in a work titled “*War without restrictions*” colonels Liang and Xiangsui, analyze both strategic cultures, and in an attempt for to not to fall into the trap of the arms race that made the USSR collapse, to expand the actions from the field of war to all areas of human activity “*the crack stock market, a computer virus, a rumor that causes bank runs, etc.*” It's really an old issue: the weak's response to the strong”, known as asymmetric war.

It is in consequence, we envisioned the era of awakening with the *Pacific's* own weight as the “*ocean of business*” to the detriment of the Atlantic, as Kissinger predicted.

At present, the largest planetary investor in Africa is China, and a priority trading partner in many Latin American countries, and will be even more so in the foreseeable future.

China has advanced decisively in cutting edge technology, especially in the so-called Industrial Revolution 4.0; in aerospace technology, biotechnology, etc. Also in the development of an Infrastructure and Development Bank that has more capital than the World Bank, to give just one example, and that quickly caused many Asian and European countries to join it; but everything started with the Shanghai Cooperation Agreement, which today positions it as a country of global importance and since 2013 when its president Xi Jinping launched China's biggest geopolitical project the “Sino-Russian strategic megaproject”, called “*The Belt and Silk Road*”, will surely complete the American setback in Asia.

Russia: Eurasiatic /Continentalist- The former communist military superpower, has returned to rediscover its destiny at the hands of Vladimir Putin. It is he who has put her back on the international stage, not as an overwhelming military power, as in the days of the Soviet administration, but as an economic and technological power, in asserting its geostrategic and geopolitical importance of energy resources, today so demanded by the European Union and by China fundamentally. It is also to highlight the current sovereign and defiant attitude of Russia facing the United States when they have wanted to install the so-called missile shield in countries that were satellites of the former USSR, such as the cases of Poland and the Czech Republic, demonstrating the turn taken by the relations of power.

Note that it was an unimaginable situation a few years ago such a challenge to US hegemony, indeed, the process of Ukraine with the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, is a clear demonstration of the changes we observe.

It should be noted on another plane, that by the actions of the US and its Western Partners (today, no longer so loyal) Russia initiated a deep agreement

with China by joining the Shanghai Cooperation Agreement and lately the Eastern Economic Forum, known as the **Forum of Vladivostok**, which was key in the "rapprochement" between the two Koreas, in September of last year (2017) and in the transcendental understanding achieved between Russia and Japan, in the course of 2018 ; establishing a railway development project with a train that from Japan will pass through the islands in dispute between both countries to connect with the Russian Trans-Siberian and from there to reach the European market and those of Central Asia. This is extremely important for the consolidation of another regional organization led by Moscow, the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), which brings together Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia, in a step to strengthen the process of integration in the post-Soviet space.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the greatest Russian presence in its return to the global geopolitical panel has been, on the one hand, with the military intervention of its Aerospace Forces in the fight against International Terrorism in the Syrian Arab Republic, something that has been coordinated with the elite Commands of the Islamic Republic of Iran in a war clearly imposed by external actors. While on the other hand it hit NATO with its agreement to sell weapons and agreements for the region with Turkey, returning to compete in the world market for high-tech weapons.

We conclude that the Global Unstable Geopolitical Board is today Multipolar:

With three powers of first level: China, the United States and Russia.

Other important but lesser players in the world geopolitical chess:

India: India did not become a great geopolitical space that unbalanced and contained China, (as the North American hegemon wanted). India and China improved their relations despite border disputes in Tibet area and the Kashmir region, which both India and Pakistan claim. But India is also in a similar process like China, whose economic growth also causes a shift in the interests of that country to ensure the same in the long term and there also collided with the idea of unilateralism.

Its vast population, which has already passed the 1,200 million inhabitants and grows at a faster rate than that of China, suggests that it will soon be on the podium of the world superpowers with decisive influence. We believe that this rise will not be immediate, because India must first solve enormous problems of social inequality, extreme poverty, backwardness and abandonment in its (rural) population.

Like China, for the South Americans, India is just beginning to appear on our horizon. We must not forget that until the mid-nineteenth century both were the economies where the colonial empires of the time were trying to conquer

their markets, since they were the main ones of the world, and today they are back to that height, but as exporting giants.

European Union: -Atlantist- The current situation of the European Union is that of an economic giant in crisis, stagnation and political dwarfism. It has strategic limitations, since in the military it is a pawn of the North American game, proof of this is its participation in the invasion of Afghanistan or its paralysis in the crisis of the Balkans that allowed USA to take full ownership of that geopolitical move. Also, the division in the EU by the invasion of Iraq showed its lack of political unity in international issues, annulling it as a player in the world board, only present by the commercial flows of the French and German economies, fundamentally.

In its weaknesses, the European Union has a heavy dependence on the energy sector, mainly with Russia, which prevents it from presenting itself as a player outside its borders, even though NATO now has a globalist policy (for which it is not ready).

In that sense, the only member that was reliable and privileged with the hegemonic power was England (today after the BREXIT, outside the Union). The EU derives from a strategic relationship since the Second World War with the US, which sterilized every alternative to conform as a continental power with global weight and was only allowed to be an economic giant inland. Added to this is a serious demographic problem such as the aging of its populations and the lack of population growth that makes it dependent on the foreign work hand, despite the resistance to social incorporate them, which is already a problem that puts in crisis to the traditional political structures with the rise of the so-called extreme right political parties

On the political level, the incorporation of new members to the Union increases the difficulties to reach consensus, because for example the idea of relaunching the European Constitution was restrained by the popular vote of France and the Netherlands (2005), and now the rejection of Poland was added to him. That is why they had to resort to the Treaty of Lisbon to make a Constitution without consulting their Citizens. We must also remember that after the crisis of garbage mortgages in 2008, Europe in general could not fully recover from the economic crash, and therefore, there are two Europes within the Union: a peripheral and another Central (which no longer has Great Britain) , which is compounded by the strong instability caused by the emergence of eurosceptics and the position they are reaching in several countries, which makes the European Union look at an unlikely future.

Finally, the growing power of the central region of Asia and the countries of the Pacific Basin mark a course of decline in the presence of this block in the

medium term. Finally, the important EU members are already questioning the sanctions applied to Russia at the request of the USA. Italy already announced that stance and German Chancellor Merkel also said it will not apply new sanctions on Russia, noting that Germany is the only real economic power in Europe and its locomotive. The EU is a deteriorating Atlantism.

Japan: -Atlantic- It is the other Economic Giant members of the so-called Atlantic sector, which for several years has been losing ground to the detriment of its main competitor in the region that is China. Country with which it did not definitively close the wounds caused by the Japanese occupation in previous times and during the Second World War.

Japan by the treaties signed after its unconditional surrender to the allies in 1945, can practically not participate in international politics at military terms, but is only from the field of diplomacy and granting financial aid to solve military expenses such as the cases of the Iraq War and Afghanistan. The last Japanese administrations have tried to get out of this terrible defeat stage (it is the only country on the globe that was attacked with nuclear weapons) but its population is reluctant to have a more active international role than the Japanese multinationals.

Just as Europe is dependent on Strategic Resources, mainly Energy, and militarily depends on its ally US. Since in Japanese soil it has several military bases and that are fundamental used to protect the North American security, before the proximity with North Korea.

From the economic point of view, Japan has invested heavily in the region, especially in the countries of Southeast Asia, the so-called "Asian tigers", and in Central Asia to obtain the energy resources necessary to maintain its high technological level. It is very possible that the evolution of international events and the new geoeconomic realities will lead Japan to rethink a new geopolitics with China that would reinforce them by the multiple contributions of each Nation to an alliance of that nature.

There are evidently other regional actors, but this work is directed to our geopolitical position and the main actors that have participation in our space of the South American subcontinent. Especially the BRICS today "strangely" disappeared from the mass communication media of westerners, of which we have the South American giant Brazil as its main member. (That if it is part of our Geopolitical Space and with a fundamental importance in any analysis of scenarios that we contemplate).

Other actors are: the countries of *the Commonwealth of Nations* Commonwealth of Nations -Atlantists-, 53 independent and semi

independent sovereign countries, which highlighted Canada, Australia and New Zealand and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Association of Southeast -ASEAN- Asian Nations -Pro Atlantists-. But they do not have global roles like those described above.

The "Unstable Board" and its consequences on our South American Continent

On this unstable board, we said in an article that we made in October 2006, that the new world scenarios of this century would be those that emerge from the struggle for the control of natural resources and that for this the USA had developed a series of ideas that the administrations of the 80s and 90s executed clearly, and whose axis was to establish an absolute and global military superiority and for which applied the geopolitics of control of the rimland (edge of Eurasia), following the basic lines of the geostrategist Spykman, with the establishment of military bases around the world because being a maritime power must surround the Eurasian heart.

And so not only have military dominance but also to maintain and monitor economic "manu militari" control of renewable and non - renewable natural resources, ensuring its provision and impairment in access to them by their main competitors.

The idea of their strategists foresee that the "*Economic and Industrial Continental Spaces*" would be consolidated in the XXI century, and that they would be a strong competition to their ideas of Hegemonism, therefore a clear policy would be to prevent the formation of a block of that nature in his backyard, a guarantee of USA national security. It is evident that the emergence of new international actors faces this military, economic and financial unilateralism, at present

We synthesize this unstable board today in 2019, like this:

1. Highest level. Multipolarity with three centers: Washington, Moscow and Beijing.
2. High self-determination level. European Union and Japan, India.
3. Level of resistance: Turkey, South Africa, Australia, Canada, Brazil, and Iran that have the capacity to limit the interference of globalization in their own territory. That is, they have internal self-determination and very limited external self-determination.

4. Level of dependence. The rest of the countries, practically all Latin America.

Conclusions

Crises imply opportunities, as we saw in the previous description, the world is in reconfiguration and therefore in crisis. And remember then that history, as in the first decade of the nineteenth century, puts us again before the possibility of reaching a new stage of independence and not only formal politics, but cultural, economic, technological.

Today global changes again give us an opportunity to consolidate a regional unit that allows us to be able to limit interference of globalization on our own territory, in a world hungry for natural resources, to use the capital raised from the strengthening the areas of Science and Technology and being able to enter the world of the industrial revolution 4.0. The "*political realism*" is then imposed: that which allows us to assume theoretical idealist projects with certain skepticism, but that does not mean that we must stop thinking and try to realize them.

The *Political Realism* incorporates the rationality to achieve the goods and satisfy the interests of the community or people that best deploy its strategy. In this case, we must see South America as a "*continent island*" with more than 350 million inhabitants (with only two languages, also related between them) 50,000 km of navigable waterways, owning 30% of the planet's freshwater reserves and all strategic minerals for the 21st century, with an area of 18 million km² that is double Europe and twice the United States.

That is why South America must think of itself as a geopolitical unit with its own meaning and thus take an important step to eliminate the current fragmentation of the continent. So to extend the proposal to the whole of South America is an act of prudence, as well as strategic perception.

And because the idea of *the American Century* is in crisis, as we have been detailing it until now, it is almost certain that its strategists and think tanks will try to manage the decline by consolidating in areas that have better control and there lies the mayor danger for our development as a "**Self-centered Economic Industrial Continental Space**".

This explains the continuity of the plans both to impose the Free Trade Agreements from the economic point of view to close the access to the region from extracontinental competitors or the increase of military bases in our continent to maintain objectives closer to their territory and easier to control and influence what they contemptuously contemplate in their "*backyard*".

This Unstable Board scheme that we described earlier must be well interpreted by the countries of South and Latin America, by its political, military, business sectors, labor unions, intellectuals and university leaderships to avoid mistakes about what our permanent national and regional interests are, and one of them is our vision and relationship with this new globalized world. Because the lack of a strategic ideas in the last 27 years (1991), let us to be leaded by the siren songs of an overwhelming hegemonism that led to recurrent political-economic-social crises.

Therefore, it is urgent for the South American states to have a long-term vision that allows us to plan the next 20 or 30 years, on this competitive world, which is not only of States but also of companies linked to them, to have that strategic vision it constitutes a valuable asset for their economies. In this public and private cooperation priorities must be establish through state policies to achieve the strategic objectives of high development and growth, outcomes for nation as a whole and not only for some sectors.

Reality shows that if South America and Latin America really wants to occupy a worthy and reasonable place in the emerging new world, the place it deserves for its history, which tells the vocation of greatness of its people and the gigantic space continental territory that they possesses, must necessarily consider a geopolitical strategy and an international policy of a great Iberoamerican nation and South America.

This *Great Space* has the advantage of not being an ex nihilo creation; it is made on the antecedent of ALADI, the Mercosur creation with 27 years (Treaty of Asuncion 1991) also the experience of the Andean Pact is added, then UNASUR.

Four Countries have the maximum responsibility to achieve this objective: two, on the Pacific Ocean: Colombia and Peru and two on the Atlantic Ocean: Argentina and Brazil.

And we can observe with a certain vision of possibility that from the "*political realism*" of the geopolitical strategists of the Continent today have a horizon much more broader than the limitations of each "*Tiny Motherland*" (*Patria Chica*) to realize us in the Latin and South America " *Great Motherland*" (*Patria Grande*) the only alternative to get ahead and progress in this XXI Century, if not as the great Brazilian thinker Helio Jaguaribe said we will be the trash of the history and we will have lost another century.

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