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What would happen in Latin America if the NATO-Ukraine-Russia conflict broke out?

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What worries us is not that the problem will be there in Eastern Europe, but that Latin American-Caribbeans are imbricated in the dynamics of a deep international conflict, which has characteristics of becoming a (terminal) World War III.

For now we must apply the maxim of Chaos Theory: "The flapping of the wings of a butterfly, can be felt on the other side of the world."

We Latin American-Caribbeans should be concerned about this litigation, especially because of the impact on our economies. The double effect will be on the one hand an increase in the price of agricultural commodities of the Ukraine is exporter, thus expecting an increase in foreign exchange income. On the other hand, the rise in international oil and gas prices generates inflationary pressure on energy and food.

Proclaiming the start of an invasion of Ukraine (which never happened), US President Joe Biden announced sanctions against Russian oligarchs and banks, as well as the deployment of more troops in the Baltic countries, while the European Union ordered retaliation against Russian politicians and officials, in response to his decision to recognize the independence of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics.

The announced sanctions include the Central Bank, the Ministry of Finance and the National Wealth Fund, with more than \$80 billion in assets. Under the sanctions, all assets of those banks in U.S. jurisdictions will be frozen.

Biden appeared to keep some of the stricter and more far-reaching financial sanctions, which would include an export ban that would leave Russia without access to high-tech for its industries and armed forces, and bans that would sideline any ability of Moscow to do business with the rest of the world.

For his part, the Social Democratic German Federal Chancellor, Olaf Scholz, announced the suspension of the certification of the gas pipeline, essential for its implementation. The project will undergo a political reassessment by the Ministry of Economy due to the new geopolitical situation following Russia's recognition of the separatist territories of eastern Ukraine.

Perhaps the best way to begin to understand what is happening in Ukraine is to leave aside the information provided by the concentrated media, desperate to play war. The last thing China would do is break the strong bond with Russia. All multipolar arming sits there, with vectors in various directions (ASEAN, BRICS, Central Asia and the Middle East, America).

Contrary to the not at all innocent media nonsense, China, through the New Silk Road, is trying to weave all these regions and there Russia plays fundamental roles in geoeconomic and security matters on Asian territory. The hegemonic press also points out that Germany and France are hardening before Russia, but at the meetings in Munich and Brussels their representatives indicated that it was necessary to loosen tension and promote dialogue between the protagonists.

We are facing today an avoidable crisis that was foreseeable and even predicted, deliberately precipitated, but easily resolved with common sense, said former U.S. Ambassador Jack F. Matlock. "I cannot avoid the suspicion that this is an elaborate farce, grossly magnified by prominent elements of the American media to serve an internal political end."

The Joe Biden administration, which faces rising inflation, the ravages of Omicron, blame for the withdrawal from Afghanistan, as well as failing to win its own party's support for Build Back Better legislation, is reeling from declining approval ratings just as it prepares for this year's congressional elections. So why not manufacture a victory by pretending that it prevented the invasion of Ukraine by "standing up to Vladimir Putin," Matlock asks.

Through hegemonic communication monopolies, U.S. and European allies attempt to enact a narrative that stigmatizes Russia over events in Ukraine. To do this, they take up the Manichean primer of the cold war and present themselves as the *good heroics* who protect Europe and the Western world from the threats of the "Caucasian barbarians".

The precedents of the current conflict show, however, that the reality is quite different from the version propagated by the great Western powers and the hegemonic media. Beyond the ethnic-cultural identity and consumer market of around 44 million people, Ukraine is central to Moscow as it forms the extensive seat belt on the Russian border.

Ukraine inherited the aviation and high-tech industry from the Soviet era and is one of the world's leading food producers. The pipeline that still carries the largest volume of Russian gas sold to Europe runs through Ukrainian territory. *The Nord Stream2 line* of the new 1,224-kilometer gas pipeline, which runs through the Baltic Sea and not through Ukrainian territory, is already completed, but pending certification by Germany to become operational.

Escalating the conflict

For some skeptics, what is happening in Ukraine and the exchanges of dimes and diretes and threats between the United States (and its acolytes of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO) and Russia represent a boast (a bluff) like what has happened so much since the Cold War, whose most detonating case was the Ballistic Missile Crisis in Cuba in 1963, which was resolved by papal intermediation.

Reality shows that today there is a real threat to Russia from NATO, the most extensive hemispheric treaty of military defense and aggression, which survived the Cold War and which has expanded, with the number of members, its military and strategic power.

The events in Ukraine are predictable developments of the expected Russian reaction to the interventionist policies of the US and NATO in Eastern Europe. Vladimir Putin has always made it clear that he will not admit any kind of NATO expansion that could endanger Russia's security, while the Western hegemonic press replicates the Russophobic narrative that the colonized media around the world repeat as if it were the absolute truth.

The truth is that Russia has invested much more in armament and modernization, far above all NATO members, in addition to the factor in favor of training the Russian army, in extreme weather conditions that generate serious differences in terms of mobilization, dynamism and effectiveness.

There are several premises-hypotheses for the analysis, some of them seem crazy. The United States is not interested in escalating the conflict directly on the military level, beyond what is required to convince or force European countries to meet the percentage of their GDP devoted to military spending and the acquisition of American weapons or alliances to produce part of their components in Europe.

What Washington is interested in is escalating the conflict commercially and financially, blocking the use of the Nord Stream II gas pipeline and, in general, minimizing the flow of Russian gas to Europe, and imposing on Europe the use of American liquefied gas, much more expensive, while expanding the supply of gas from Qatar and "offshore" with Israeli participation.

We are talking about deposits from Egypt to Cyprus to Lebanon, but the stone in the shoe is Syria with its allies Iran and Russia. Also with Libya, while the US-French attempts to destabilize Algeria (spring of colors, tensions with Morocco) to add it to its Holy Energy Alliance continue, while Russia will try to maintain and strengthen its traditional ties with Algeria.

U.S. multinationals such as Chevron and Exxon Mobil have contracts to research, extract and explore gas in Ukraine. In addition to their extraordinary benefits, the investments aim to reduce Russia's energy and therefore political dependence.

Hypotheses

Good analyses put us in the face of the premises-hypotheses of the conflict. One, that NATO and the US are going to create a false positive that generates a Russian response, which may arise from a shot or a confrontation with pro-Russian forces in Dombast and Luganst, which would cause an immediate displacement of Russia in the face of the act of aggression, which would give rise to a direct confrontation between NATO and Russia.

According to this premise, as the advances and setbacks of both sides are, the levels of confrontation/aggression will escalate, since it is a very common NATO strategy to open several flanks of war. The second flank of war could go after Crimea and Sevastopol, where Russia would move its strength and firepower with maritime, submarine and multimodal fighting to defend Russia's maritime entry into the Black Sea.

The second premise on the table is that NATO admits Ukraine as a full member and Russia recognizes the independence of Dombast and Luganst. NATO can declare (even without the consent of President Zelensky and the Ukrainian establishment) admission to the bloc, which would lead to two responses from Russia. The first is that Dombast and Luganst "independent" admit the entry of Russian troops, which would generate an all-out war of annihilation, along with hybrid warfare to control Crimea and quickly reach Kiev.

The incorporation of Ukraine into NATO, which would require a modification of its statutes, since a country in conflict with a neighbor or without full sovereignty over all its territory (Ukraine and Georgia) cannot be admitted until these two situations cease. This statutory modification would require the vote of all member countries, which does not seem feasible and could generate tensions between the US and some of its allies (Germany, for example).

Russia would deploy its fighter jets just like NATO. Russia would have air superiority for Sukhoi and other-generation fighters that would make NATO retreat quickly.

The third premise points out that in the face of defeat in the conflict in Ukraine, NATO decides to open a front in another region, which may imply Chinese participation in the conflict. NATO to wear down Russia can threaten any country where Russia has interests. Two possibilities are presented here: Turkey and Venezuela.

Turkey for the geographical and military positioning, and that by moving away militarily from NATO has a debt to the bloc, more moral than of another type, in addition to representing an ally for Russia to establish a strategy of double clamp that can box NATO. Turkey has good military equipment and army, just as some pro-Russia Arab nations would join together to support and withdraw NATO forces to Western Europe.

This would force Italy, Greece and others to establish whether they intervene in the conflict or establish neutrality. Russia has a weapon in its favor: to turn off the gas key for Europe as a pressure measure. Europe without gas and without fuel is left in a position of handicap that forces them to a rational way - to negotiate with Russia and withdraw support from NATO - and another irrational, to go after Russia.

While the US is relaxing its position in relation to the nuclear agreement with Iran, precisely to prevent another front from opening up in the Persian Gulf, there are analysts who bet that the irrational path will prevail, because NATO is above the European Union, since it has a larger budget than the European Central Bank itself. and has the world's leading arms industries and other lobbies.

Washington is trying to prevent European and Asian countries from using the "Northern route" (Arctic) not only to affect Russia but also China. In this sense, a strong "environmentalist" campaign, even in multilateral entities, to "protect" the Arctic is to be expected. It also seeks to continue to hinder the normalization of Russian-Japanese relations by resolving the Kuril problem and signing a peace treaty.

In a conflictive scenario, the countries of the Middle East (Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Iraq) and Nigeria, are going to place very expensive oil for Europe and for NATO, not to mention that Iran (an ally of Russia) can block the Strait of Hormuz, where more than 70% of the world's oil passes. NATO would then use Israel to limit Iran, which would open a new hole in the conflict.

While that happens, NATO will intend to use Taiwan to control the China Sea and attack Russia from its eastern flank, a fact that would mobilize China (Russia's ally) to neutralize Taiwan and position itself in the territory, demolishing the US Fifth Fleet.

Given that, NATO would mobilize Colombia and Brazil against Venezuela, which is the first country with oil reserves that could serve Russia geopolitically, as well as geostrategic supply bases. The goal would be to mobilize Colombia and Brazil, so that in a triple clamp strategy – north, west, south – attack Venezuela militarily and have control over the oil wells. Venezuela has better weapons than Colombia and Brazil, NATO's South American partners.

It should be remembered that Colombian President Iván Duque has already discussed with NATO about the Venezuela Case, as has his Brazilian counterpart Jair Bolsonaro.

With regard to Venezuela, the threat from NATO is real, via Colombia. The situation with Brazil is not so clear, after Bolsonaro's recent visit to Moscow (the position of the Brazilian military and the weight of its nationalist component is decisive) and the new correlation of forces in South America (Argentina, Chile, Bolivia and Peru).

On the other hand, the strengthening of Russian military cooperation with Venezuela, with a view to neutralizing any threat from the Colombian side, including the eight US bases, seems to include logistical infrastructure to support a stable Russian presence (basically submarines) in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico.

And coming to the apocalyptic hypothesis, in the face of the desperation of defeat, it will be NATO and not Russia that will use its nuclear arsenal. Russia would have immediate and superior response capacity, but this would open nuclear confrontation on every front that opens up in the conflict. And surely we will not know which premise or hypothesis was the right one.

Former Uruguayan President José Pepe Mujica referred to the increase in tension in Eastern Europe and wondered if in the future it will be possible to "abandon the military budgets." "As long as war is a way of tiebreaking, we will continue in prehistory," he said.

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