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China and Russia "threats" to Latin America?

That is why, also in Latin America, clear symptoms of the slow take-off of their own visions for a new world appear. Contemporary history is changing at a universal rate.



George Washington University, founded in 1821, is one of the most prestigious in the world and recognized for its international studies. [On May 26 \(2022\), he received Antony J. Blinken, U.S. Secretary of State, a well-qualified](#) official with sustained experience in security and foreign policy issues, who delivered an important [speech on "The Administration's Approach to the People's Republic of China,"](#) evidently prepared with precision of ideas and concepts.

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"We are not looking for a conflict or a new Cold War. On the contrary, we are determined to avoid both," Said Secretary of State Antony Blinken. AFP Photo

Several analysts have examined the [content of that speech](#). It is clear that the US is seriously interested in defending what it now calls a rules-based international order. That order is the one that was born after the Second World War and its foundations are found in the [Charter of the United Nations \(UN\)](#) and the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), which enshrine essential concepts such as self-determination, sovereignty and peaceful resolution of disputes. Under that criterion, the U.S. seeks not only to sustain it, but to modernize it. And that order is *"under serious and sustained challenge"*: on the one hand, because Russian President Vladimir Putin represents a *"clear and current threat"* from the war he is waging in Ukraine; and, on the other, because the *"long-term challenge"* is really the People's Republic of China. Of course, the US has its powerful geostrategic reasons for trying to maintain its hegemony.



Secretary Blinken's vision must be understood with his military complement, that is, the [vision presented](#) by [Army General Laura Richardson, Commander of U.S. Southern Command](#) before the Senate Armed Services Committee on March 24 (2022). There it is categorically warned that China is the "*main threat*" and Russia a "*secondary threat*; [whereas China is "expanding" in Latin America](#), while Russia "*intensifies instability*" through its ties with Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua; and that an "*integrated deterrence*" (actions from all spheres of social life) will be carried out to counter these "*negative*" influences, which challenge the influence of the US.

As can be seen, in this muddled and complex plot, Latin America becomes part of the strategy formulated by the US, which explicitly seeks to align "our allies and partners" in promoting "a shared vision for the future," according to Secretary Blinken's speech and converting "our shared neighborhood," according to the exposition of the Commander of the Southern Command, in "our best defense". The region, therefore, will henceforth be subjected to all kinds of pressures and actions for this alignment. There is no greater difficulty with the right-wing and neoliberal Latin American governments that, as has already been seen in other historical moments, subordinate themselves to what the US has in the key matters of international relations. But the problem facing the colossus of the north is the position taken by progressive, democratic and new left governments, which are not willing to allow themselves to be manipulated. The recent Latin American positions around [the IX Summit of the Americas, convened by the U.S. to be held in Los Angeles](#), between June 6 and 10 (2022), express it: it has been Mexico, with [President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, the first to question a call that excludes precisely Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela](#). . President Alberto Fernández in Argentina, Luis Arce of Bolivia, Xiomara Castro of Honduras and, in addition, the CARICOM countries have joined, so the fate of that Summit is still unclear, [while a CELAC meeting is being attempted](#), with the participation of all its members, because even [the OAS has ceased to be the former continental interlocutor](#). In short, there has been a historic rupture with enormous repercussions for the future.



On the other hand, in Latin America it is becoming increasingly difficult to consider Russia and China as "threats". The [Cold War era](#) also left lessons for understanding the logics of power confrontation. In the region, the commercial, financial or any other ties, built with these countries, is a specific achievement of Latin American States, entrepreneurs and companies, which knew how to take advantage of the space created by the same capitalist and transnational globalization. The impact of the war in Ukraine, which has closed the Russian market, has earned the special attention of ECLAC, which recently presented its [study *Economic and financial effects in Latin America and the Caribbean of the conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine*](#) and launches a new one: [Repercussions in Latin America and the Caribbean of the war in Ukraine: how to face this new crisis?](#) Exporters of Ecuadorian bananas and roses have found a profitable market in Russia for years and also the blow of the closure of that market was a problem that goes beyond the economic and affects the political life of the country. Brazil is part of the BRICS and Argentina, interested in integrating (BRICSA), is likely to join. And it is right-wing governments, such as that of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil or a corporate-neoliberal and plutocratic one like that of Guillermo Lasso in Ecuador, that want to strengthen their relations with China. Again, the position taken by Andrés Manuel López Obrador is exemplary: he condemns the war in Ukraine, advocates a new Latin Americanism, questions outdated [monroism](#).



Latin American governments, as well as the armed forces of the region (which the new U.S. strategy wants to involve directly, as in the old past of the Cold War) should be the most careful and interested in the study and analysis of U.S. documents such as those I refer to, in order to ensure understanding of contemporary international geostrategies and to be able to direct criteria and strategies of the region's own and sovereigns. that seriously reinforce a new world precisely based on rules. Historical experience provides serious reasons to reclaim that world, because Latin America knows the violations imposed by interventionism and interference of all kinds. The sharpest example of this persists in the blockade against Cuba, which since 1992 has merited 28 annual UN resolutions demanding the end of a unilateral measure that, paradoxically, breaks with that "rules-based world". And the same can be said of the blockade of Venezuela. The horrific and condemnable war in Ukraine has shown, however, that the world is heading for a new and inevitable multipolarity with multiculturalism, in which both Russia and China have their own positions, while the US and NATO maintain theirs. Their worldviews don't necessarily have to be what all countries should have. That is why, also in Latin America, clear symptoms of the slow take-off of their own visions for a new world appear. Contemporary history is changing at a universal rate.



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