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Towards a new globalization

"China has become a key trading partner for the region. It is already the first destination market for exports from Brazil and Chile, and the second from Peru, Cuba and Costa Rica.



Historically, four moments of "globalization" of the world can be considered. The first occurs at the beginning of the sixteenth century, as a result of the conquest and colonization of America. Europe became the center of the original or *primitive accumulation* of capital and Spain the hegemonic power. The *mercantilism* of the time promoted an active trade for the benefit of the metropolises, at the same time that it established a series of preconditions for the dependence and underdevelopment of the colonial countries, as happened with Latin America.

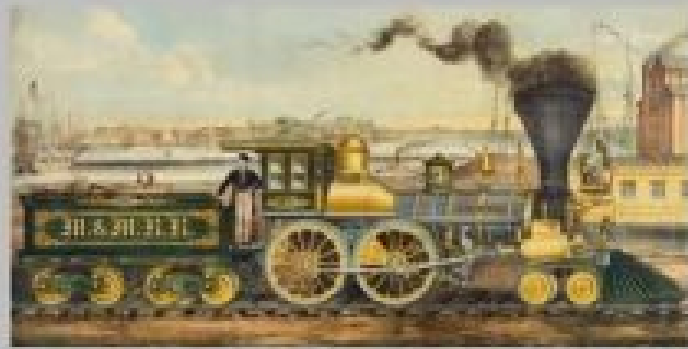
The second was born with the first [industrial revolution](#) (steam engine, industry), from the second half of the eighteenth century, with which the capitalist system was consolidated in Europe and the USA, under the world hegemony of Great Britain. Latin American countries achieved independence from Spain and Portugal in the early nineteenth century,

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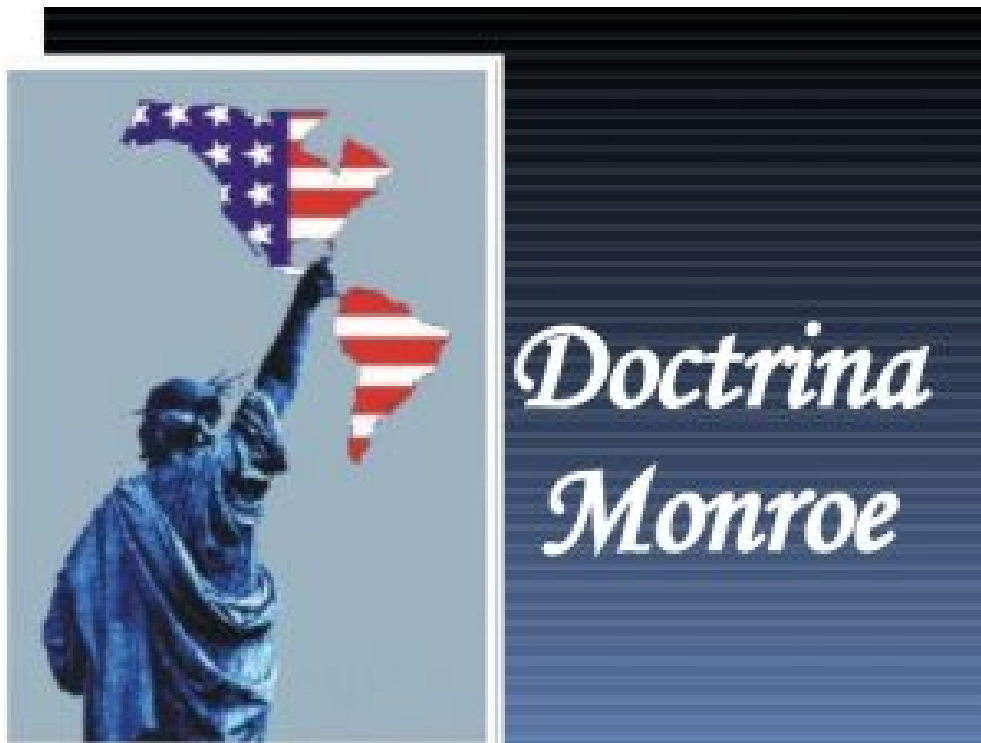
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but capitalism did not take off in the nascent nation-states of the region. In them, pre-capitalist economies were consolidated, based on the primary export sector, oligarchic domains and internal super-exploitation of workers, particularly peasants and indigenous people, subject to servile forms of labor relations, which enriched small family and social groups. The international market benefited European industrialization, while the few Latin American exportable resources were subject to prices and demand from the central countries.

LA PRIMERA Y LA SEGUNDA REVOLUCIÓN INDUSTRIAL.



The third, at the beginning of the twentieth century, resulted from the second industrial revolution (oil and electricity), which promoted the birth of giant monopoly companies and with them the rise of *imperialism* as a new phase of capitalism. The UNITED States became the world hegemonic power and its interests, with the application of *monroism* ("[America for the Americans](#)"), conditioned the Latin American economies, whose capitalist takeoff (except Mexico, Brazil, Argentina) practically occurs in the mid-twentieth century.



The fourth is the most complex. The [third industrial revolution](#) (atomic energy) is also located in the previous cycle, because the new globalizing moment coincides with the advance of computing, electronics, robotics, cybernetics; the take-off of China, Russia and the BRICS; the breakdown of US hegemony; the relative rise of "peripheral" countries. It is a *process in progress*, which has immediately succeeded the transnational globalization caused by the collapse of Soviet-type socialism, but which acquires, at present, characteristics of global multipolarity and multiculturalism, projected to the twenty-first century.

Transnational globalization with US hegemony served to take root in Latin America neoliberalism. It began in the 70s with the establishment of terrorist military regimes in the Southern Cone and the succession of "democratic" governments that embraced the slogans of that economic ideology, conditioned, from 1982, by the payment of the external debt and the agreements with the IMF. The results, disastrous in terms of equity and social justice, but not in terms of the concentrating accumulation of wealth experienced by the region's business elites, to whom governments were equally subordinated, led to social reaction and questioning. It was expressed in the unprecedented cycle of progressive governments of the twenty-first century, which tried to affirm *economies of a social type*, overcoming the neoliberal way. In the midst of these processes, Latin America found

new opportunities for growth and economic development with China, Russia and other Asian countries.

[ECLAC](#), an academic and technical entity, has numerous publications on China and Latin America. In October 2021 it organized the ["II CELAC-China High-Level Academic Forum and the VI China-Latin America and the Caribbean Think Tank Forum"](#), in which its then Secretary, Alicia Bárcena, stated: "Cooperation between China and Latin America and the Caribbean offers an opportunity to reduce global asymmetries and support an inclusive transformative economic recovery that promotes sustainable development in line with the 2030 Agenda." In a 2012 study entitled [China and Latin America and the Caribbean: Towards a Strategic Economic and Commercial Relationship](#), ECLAC recognizes: "The countries of the region should redouble their efforts to diversify their sales to China -incorporating more value and knowledge-, stimulate business, commercial and technological alliances with their peers in that country, and promote Latin American investments in Asia and the Pacific that facilitate a greater regional presence in Asian value chains, structured around China. Trade and investment ties between China and Latin America and the Caribbean have continued to expand. In 2010, the value of bilateral trade approached \$200 billion, and over the past decade the region was China's most dynamic trading partner" (<https://bit.ly/3DJif7B>).



The head of the United States Southern Command, Laura Richardson (c), poses for a photo shoot with General officers from several countries in the Americas, during the South American Defense Conference. Photo: EFE.

However, in the "[South American Defense Conference](#)" ([Southdec](#)), which in mid-September (2022) was held in Ecuador with the presence of senior military commanders from America (10 Latin Americans) and the privileged participation of the commander of the United States Southern Command, Laura Richardson, the general theme was security, considering drug trafficking, criminal organizations, environmental security and even internal "subversion" (<https://bit.ly/3DsMpeP>). But the crucial issue, in the words of Commander Richardson, dealt with the "cross-cutting challenges" to democracy and freedoms of the continent, as well as the "[threat](#)" that China and Russia pose to Latin America. In essence, it is the call for a new *monroism*, which seeks to rely on the armed forces, under the geopolitics of the United States, as happened in the era of the cold war (<https://bit.ly/3qX9yyD>).

Faced with this situation, a serious problem arises: how will the high military leadership of Latin America reconcile these "threats" with a reality that is already configured? Because, as ECLAC itself highlighted a decade ago: "China has become a key trading partner for the region. It is already the first destination market for exports from Brazil and Chile, and the second from Peru, Cuba and Costa Rica. It is also the third country among the main origins of imports from Latin America and the Caribbean, with a value that represents 13% of the total imports of the subregion and, in turn, Latin America and the Caribbean has become one of the most prominent destinations for Chinese FDI." The serious impact of Latin America's falling trade relations with Russia due to the war in Ukraine has also been studied by [ECLAC](#). What would happen in our economies if the same thing happened with China.

In addition, international relations are sovereign and subject to the Constitutions of each country, as well as the policies of governments, but not of the military. And it is foreseeable, as is happening with Ecuador, now governed by a banker, supported by the most conservative business elite in the country, with whom an oligarchic-neoliberalism has been consolidated, that economic relations with China will be expanded, because it is not a "threat", but an opportunity for "good business", while interest in joining the Belt and Road (New Silk Road) grows. It is an international process that has become unstoppable in contemporary history and that determines the new globalization.

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