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Competition or Cooperation: Antagonistic Positions of U.S. Security Doctrine and Chinese Foreign Policy

Despite this background, in Latin America there are still thinkers, pseudo-journalists and troubled intellectuals who wonder, more or less pitied, about how it was possible that they tried to assassinate Cristina Fernández de Kirchner.



On October 12, four days before the XX Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, the Joe Biden administration released its National Security [Strategy](#) (NSS). The document is an update of the doctrine drawn up in 2017, during the government of Donald Trump, in which the end of the [post-Cold War period](#) is proposed for the first time and, at the same

time, the concept of [imperfect hegemony](#) is postulated, a euphemism with which it is intended to disguise the relative fall of US power globally.

The 48-page document released by the White House outlines an underhand return to the [doctrine of strategic containment](#), devised by George Kennan after World War II, aimed at isolating the Soviet Union from as many countries as possible from the rest of the world. This configuration, developed since 1947 by the government of Harry Truman, assigned itself the role of global gendarme and motivated in Latin America and the Caribbean the implementation of the National Security Doctrine, to avoid the spread of political experiences such as Cuba. In the new doctrine, the Biden administration seeks to prevent the multipolarity posed by [China's emergence as a](#) global economic power, and the resistance of the Russian Federation to being threatened in its security by NATO.



Xi Jinping at the XX Congress of the Chinese Communist Party.

The U.S. strategy was intentionally disseminated before the XX Congress with the intention of taking center stage from Xi Jinping, head of the Chinese Communist Party, who led the deliberations of the conclave from October 16 to 22 in the Great Hall of the People, located in Beijing. 2,296 members participated in the sessions. They voted for all 200 members of the Central Committee and re-elected Xi for a five-year term. In turn, the members of the Central Committee were responsible for appointing the 25 members of the Political Bureau and the nine of the Executive Committee, the highest decision-making body of the People's Republic.

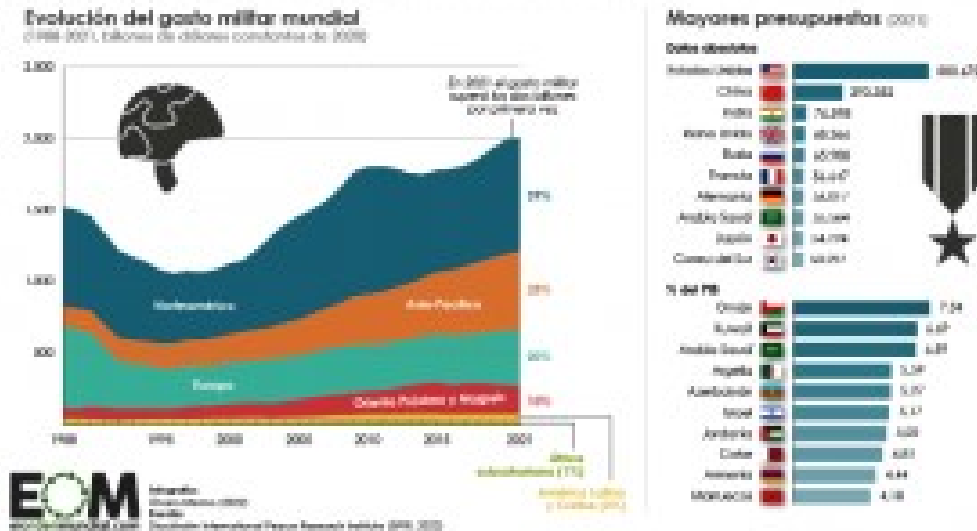
The U.S. foreign policy orientations – in this and preceding NSS – are defined by national security programs and shaped from a perspective of containment, conflict, and competition. On the other hand, Beijing's international policies, proposed in the different

party congresses, are based on the articulated concepts of cooperation and complementarity. While Washington speaks of a necessary confrontation with the "autocratic powers", Beijing postulates a modernization capable of "undertaking a new expedition of integral construction of a modern socialist country [with] concrete formation of ecological modes of production and life, limiting carbon emissions and configuring an ecological environment to fulfill the goal of building a beautiful China".

In August, Beijing – through its Foreign Minister Wang Yi – announced the [forgiveness of 23 loans](#) granted to African countries in recent years. In the period from 2000 to 2019, the Chinese government has forgiven a total of 3.4 billion dollars that were invested in infrastructure works. The announcement was made at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Beijing. That is one of the reasons why the NSS qualifies the People's Republic as the "most important geopolitical challenge" that can reconfigure the world, within the framework of patterns different from those proposed/demanded by Washington.

Beijing – says verbatim the document signed by Biden – "is the only competitor with the intention of reshaping the international order, and increasingly has the economic, diplomatic, military and technological power to do so." To prevent China from participating in this global reconfiguration, Washington places it in the group of evil actors seeking to establish contacts, ties and alliances with other countries. In this framework, the document poses two types of challenges: (a) strategic ones, which postulate Russia and China as enemies, and (b) transversal or cross-border challenges, exemplified by environmental problems, pandemics, food insecurity, terrorism and structural inflation. For the first challenge, Washington has a [defense budget](#) of 800,000 million dollars, which almost triples the resources spent by Beijing.

Una nueva escalada en la economía militar



The United States has a military budget of \$800 billion.

The document released by the State Department has a revealing paragraph regarding this paradigm: "Strategic competition is global, but we will avoid the temptation to see the world only through a competitive lens and engage countries on their own terms." This is directly related to another of the Strategy's guiding chapters: the call to "invest in the underlying sources and tools of American power and influence," which Joseph Nye defined as [soft power](#), to be developed through cognitive influence devices.

The program – which was initially operationalized during the administration of Donald Trump – supposes a form of [deglobalization](#), understood as a rupture of value chains, a greater presence of States in the productive orientation, the reimposition of cross-border trade barriers, the relocation – domestic return – of companies, and the flexible configuration of blocs linked to Washington or Beijing, defined as [progressive decoupling](#). This implies progressive degrees of disconnection, capable of technologically isolating China, taking care that this divorce does not damage the interests of transnationals residing in North America.

One of the battles most highlighted in the document by the NSS is the one that refers to geoeconomics and its nerve center, [cybersecurity](#). The White House program aims to tighten control of technology supply chains, especially those related to microprocessors. To this end, it is proposed to promote technological innovation, limit foreign dependence, generate articulations with software companies and sabotage the scientific-technological research developed by malicious actors.

In 2014, [Cisco Systems](#) CEO John Chambers asked in a public letter to Barack Obama that the National Security Agency stop intercepting the company's products to spy on foreign customers. In the last week, the [Bureau of Industry and Security](#) (BIS) of the Department of Commerce announced the prohibition of exporting to China usable equipment in the configuration of semiconductors suitable for use in military applications. The NSS references to Latin America and the Caribbean allude to the fact that "no region impacts the United States more directly than the Western Hemisphere," a formula with which they call the Americas. To prevent the ties of the different sovereign countries with the new Axis of Evil, the need to continue the isolation of Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua is postulated. With this purpose, the Southern Command has disseminated the concept of [integrated deterrence](#), within the framework of the XV Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas (CMDA), held in Brasilia last July. In this space, it was sought to impose the shared values and mutual interests – arbitrarily and unilaterally arranged – on which the exclusions and persecutions of countries, political parties or wayward social referents, potential [allies or partners](#) of evil actors should be carried out.

For Defense Secretary [Lloyd Austin](#), integrated deterrence requires "combining our strengths to maximum effect" and coordinating "interwoven operational resources and concepts," capable of confronting "harmful activities that lead to stealthily promoting its coercive, corrupt and authoritarian objectives, such as those promoted by Russia in the region, so that the Americas can remain stable and secure ... and neutralize the coercion of rivals." For Austin, it is essential to prioritize diplomatic pressure and soft devices over direct military intervention: institutional and communicational [interference](#) instead of a Plan Condor of forced disappearances.

On September 14, the South American Defense Conference was held in [Quito](#), in which eleven countries participated. Despite being a Latin American event, the head of the Southern Command, Laura Richardson – invited by the organizers – had a stellar role cataloging the "advance of China as a national security problem", which is why "we must work together as a team, playing in our respective positions in a harmonious and highly effective way (...) This region is very rich in resources, the lithium triangle is in this region. China is in this region, it is there to undermine the United States. With all the disinformation from Russia Today (RT) and Sputnik World... It's very worrying."

The NSS believes that there are smaller autocratic powers in the region, which are acting aggressively and that compromise, through their actions, regional and global stability. Among them, they categorize nationalism and populism – and therefore their highest

political references – as those responsible for preventing a working agreement against the evil ones. An alliance, stresses the NSS, that must recognize as its own the American value of "democracy, freedom and human rights."

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