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Latin America and the U.S.: The Apotheosis of Distrust

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The year 2013 was shockingly damaging to relations between the U.S. and the countries of Latin America. Edward Snowden's revelations showed that in the Western Hemisphere, Washington is trying to play only by the rules it itself has written. Using such spying programs as Prism, Boundless Informant and others, U.S. intelligence was collecting strategically useful information throughout the South American continent and using it to ensure the effectiveness of its policy in the region...

There's no need to explain that knowing the plans and intentions of its partners and rivals enables Washington to calculate its strategy, develop plans, work proactively, and achieve successes in various situations, including critical ones.

The Empire does not trust its partners, much less «hostile regimes». Traditionally submissive allies, or more accurately, U.S. satellites, are subjected to total control. These include Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, Panama, Belize, the Dominican Republic, and Paraguay (but the list doesn't end there). The «Imperial controllers» pay special attention to the large Latin American countries: Mexico, Brazil and Argentina. Preventative action for avoiding conflict situations with them is at the center of Washington's attention. The reasons are clear: the U.S. has important unresolved problems, first and foremost the neutralization of the Bolivarian Alliance for the

Peoples of America (ALBA), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and other alliances which do not include the United States. The very existence of these blocs illustrate Latin Americans' lack of faith in the ability of the U.S. to implement programs which are advantageous to the Latin American region.

Over the past decade the geopolitical position of the U.S. in the Western Hemisphere has become noticeably weaker. Colossal financial and military resources have been invested in ensuring U.S. hegemony in other regions of the world: in Afghanistan, Iraq, Northern Africa and the Middle East. The effectiveness of these efforts is highly dubious. The next few years will show whether the U.S. and NATO will be able to secure their footing in the conquered territories and continue their «expansion» into the East. However, in spite of everything, the imperialist ambitions of U.S. are without limits. Both Moscow and Beijing have a good idea of what Washington is planning for the final stage of the «charge on the East». Other world capitals understand the ultimate aim of American expansion as well.

In Latin America, one negative side effect of these imperial expeditions is evident. Distrust in Washington's aims is on the rise. Persistent concerns are taking shape that the ultimate aim of the «extremist imperialist group» now in power in the U.S. really is to establish world domination, using brute force to suppress any form of resistance if necessary. The militarization of U.S. State Department personnel is quite obvious. Many of its employees have undergone additional training in military colleges and institutes; done fieldwork in «hot spots» throughout the world, from Libya to Afghanistan; or combined diplomatic and military intelligence functions before being appointed to important posts in Latin American countries. The Pentagon possesses exhaustive information about the future theater of military action. The Southern Command of the U.S. Armed Forces is systematically reinforcing its infrastructure in the region (air and naval bases) using every possible pretext, from the war on terrorism to vaccinating the local population.

Washington has an interest in maintaining hotbeds of tension in Latin America. For example, the reconciliation of warring parties in Colombia is extremely undesirable for the Obama administration. U.S. leaders take a hostile stance toward the negotiations between the government of Juan Santos and representatives of the guerrilla group FARC which are taking place in Cuba. The reconciliation could result in the liquidation of seven large U.S. military bases in Colombia which American strategists are planning to use against the «populist» regimes in Venezuela, Ecuador and Nicaragua, as well as against Cuba. Political scientists assessed recent publications in the media about U.S. intelligence working closely with the Colombian army to rout the guerrilla groups FARC and ELN as a provocation aimed at disrupting the peace talks. The articles reveal in detail how the CIA, the NSA and U.S. military intelligence assisted in physically eliminating guerrilla leaders, including by organizing attacks on the bordering territory of Ecuador.

The Obama administration is stepping up efforts to strengthen the so-called Pacific Alliance, which includes Mexico, Peru, Colombia and Chile. After it ratified a free trade agreement with Colombia, Costa Rica became a member of the alliance. The subversive aims of the Pacific Alliance, which was established in June 2012 and is directed against the governments of Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina, Ecuador and Bolivia, are beyond question. Some political scientists

believe that this U.S. project is aimed at neutralizing ALBA, while others see a mostly anti-Brazilian focus in it.

Washington has spent a lot of energy and resources on synchronizing the activities of the regimes on the continent which are under its control and create at least a downsized version of the Pan-American market which entered history under the name of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (ALCA). This U.S. project was rejected at the fourth Summit of the Americas in Mar del Plata, Argentina in 2005 through the efforts of presidents Nestor Kirchner, Hugo Chavez, Evo Morales and others.

Brazil is paying close attention to the increasingly hostile slant of U.S. policy on the continent. The government of Dilma Rousseff has yet to receive an apology from the Obama administration for NSA and CIA spying activities against Brazil. Rousseff canceled her visit to Washington, some projects which were promising for the U.S. have been curtailed, and a number of bilateral agreements in the fields of security and cooperation of military and law enforcement agencies are being reconsidered. In the area of armaments cooperation, Brazil has made its final choice of fighter planes for its air force, rejecting Boeing's Super Hornet multirole fighter aircraft. The Swedish company Saab won out. It is expected that the 4.5-billion-dollar contract for the delivery of 36 Gripen fighter planes will be signed in 2014 after all the financial and technical terms have been agreed upon. The first plane will arrive in Brazil in late 2018.

A result of Latin America's deepening distrust toward the United States is the increased activity of such countries as Russia, India, Iran and especially China on the South American continent. **There are more and more signs that the 21st century will be the century of a «Chinese breakthrough» into the Western Hemisphere, considering what enormous resources the Chinese are already investing in the development of the national economies of Latin America.** Energy, petroleum, mining, electronics, transportation infrastructure, the defense industry - the Chinese are persistently encroaching on the sanctuaries of American business. A symbolic aspect of this Chinese infiltration is the launch of communications and research satellites for Latin American countries. China is advancing into Latin America on a broad front. Many believe that it is already unstoppable.