

Latin America at the Global Crossroads Fragmentation and Interference Reshape the Region in the New World Order

*Geopolitical and Geoeconomic Analysis, Fernando Mora¹,
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I. Executive Summary: Latin America at the Global Crossroads

Since 2022, the strategic alliance between Russia and China has driven the emergence of a *new multipolar global order*, challenging the hegemony of the United States and the West. International confrontation has unfolded in multidimensional form, encompassing military, technological, energy, economic, and narrative domains.

Latin America, once a passive observer, has become a coveted strategic territory, with a growing presence from China, Russia, Iran, and their regional allies. The region faces fragmentation of sovereignty, institutional weakening, and the expansion of illicit economies in Mexico, Nicaragua, Cuba, Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador—while areas such as the Amazon and Central America concentrate critical strategic and environmental risks.

On the political front, governments and electorates are increasingly *prioritizing* security, stability, and tangible results over traditional ideological affiliations. Conservative and pragmatic leadership is consolidating in countries such as Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina, Chile, and Costa Rica.

The influence of external actors and global authoritarian agendas highlights that the real threat lies in the *lack of regional strategic coordination*. It underscores the need to strengthen institutions, align public policies, and enhance hemispheric cooperation to project stability and credibility.

Latin America is no longer passive; it has become a strategic space where China expands infrastructure, trade, and technology; Russia strengthens aligned actors and conducts disinformation campaigns; and Iran maintains a presence through regional terrorist networks. This dynamic poses a historic crossroads: align based on ideological affinity or pursue economic pragmatism.

Pressure from the United States under Trump increases geopolitical and geoeconomic competition and heightens the need for *coordinated strategic* responses across the region.

National cases illustrate these trends. In Venezuela, a post-Maduro transition plan is being implemented in phases—stabilization, economic recovery, and political transition—seeking to secure the oil sector and reactivate international investment.

In Colombia, the expansion of criminal groups under the “Total Peace” policy has generated institutional vulnerability and territorial control by illegal actors. In Central America and the Southern Cone, Costa Rica is reinforcing security and structural reforms, while El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras partially replicate the model of Nayib Bukele, focusing on controlling

¹ <https://www.360geopolitica.org/about-3>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ff-rp783sq0>

violence and organized crime under the geoeconomic and diplomatic pressure of China-Russia and the United States.

The region faces fragmentation of sovereignty and territorial control. In countries such as Cuba, Colombia, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, armed groups and organized crime actively *participate* in governance, *consolidating* self-sustaining illicit economies in the whole region. This weakens the state's capacity to guarantee security, justice, and economic regulation.

The *Amazon region* also concentrates institutional weakness, territorial conflicts, illicit economies, and environmental risks, while strategic corridors facilitate the transport of drugs, minerals, and timber, generating violence and the displacement of Indigenous communities.

The private sector and strategic industries are essential levers of geoeconomic influence. Mining, energy, agribusiness, transportation, technology, finance, and telecommunications shape the region's strategic position. However, the concentration of foreign capital—sustained by public policy—and the presence of illicit actor's limit autonomy and competitiveness.

The region must strengthen local investment, technological innovation, and scientific cooperation to increase resilience vis-à-vis external actors.

Internationally, Latin America is perceived as a resource supplier, an emerging market, and a potential strategic actor. East Asia, the Arab world, Africa, Europe, and North America project varied interests, from trade and

investment to technological and diplomatic cooperation.

The region also faces pressure from external conflicts and global power rivalries—such as the Russia-Ukraine war, competition over the Arctic, and tensions in the Middle East—which amplify the need for coordinated regional strategies.

Ultimately, Latin America requires active political realism, institutional strengthening, technological development, and hemispheric cooperation to guarantee security, sustainable development, and strategic autonomy.

The private sector, scientific and digital diplomacy, and the consolidation of technological capabilities are fundamental levers for competing in a multipolar world.

Without proactive action, the region risks entrenching cycles of dependency, fragmentation, and loss of territorial control—compromising its security and development in an increasingly competitive global scenario.

II. Detailed Analysis

1. Introduction: Sovereignty, Global Geopolitics, and Geoeconomics

February 4, 2022, marked a global turning point. As the world watched the Beijing Olympic Games, Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping sealed a *“friendship without limits.”* It was not a ceremonial gesture; it was a strategic declaration.

In a joint communiqué, both leaders outlined the contours of the world order they sought to consolidate. The document criticized the United States and its allies— *“certain actors who represent only a minority on a global*

scale—for attempting to impose their model of society as universal, their conception of democracy as the only valid one, and for assuming that only they could resolve global problems.

In contrast to this unilateral posture, it argued that the majority of humanity demands *“a redistribution of power in the world.”* Weeks later, Russian tanks entered Ukraine [24 February 2022].

Analysts suggest the message was clear: Moscow and Beijing were prepared to redraw the global map through force and strategic assertiveness.

From this perspective, the war in Ukraine can be interpreted as the beginning of a planetary *“show of force”* aimed at challenging the reigning superpower. The world may have entered a dynamic resembling a *Second Cold War*.

In this context, Iran completes an authoritarian triangulation that combines military aggression, technological projection, and the financing of opaque global influence networks.

The BRICS—now expanded as BRICS+—illustrates this alliance mobilizing the means to achieve its objectives.

These are not isolated incidents but, as strategic analysts argue, calculated moves that exploit *power vacuums* while international institutions remain in *bureaucratic lethargy*, with limited capacity to protect sovereignty where concrete action is required.

1.1 Second Cold War

In what many analysts call a *“Second Cold War”*—marked primarily by rivalry between the United States and the China-Russia axis—the arenas of global confrontation are multiple and simultaneous.

Technologically, competition centers on semiconductors, artificial intelligence, 5G/6G, quantum computing, cybersecurity, and data control, where the struggle over standards and supply chains is decisive.

In geopolitical-military terms, the axis lies in the Indo-Pacific—particularly around Taiwan—as well as in Eastern Europe with the war in Ukraine, Greenland, the South China Sea, and the expansion or containment of alliances such as NATO.

On the economic-financial front, confrontation takes the form of sanctions, trade wars, control over strategic raw materials, energy routes, and competition over the international financial architecture.

The energy and critical resources front—gas, oil, rare earths, lithium, and the energy transition—has also become an instrument of power.

The informational and narrative domain constitutes another battlefield, involving disinformation, digital influence, platform control, and competition over the legitimacy of political models. By way of example, analysts cite the *\$2.7 trillion* used by the Venezuelan regime to sustain itself and to maintain and rise to power its *“allies”* in various regions of the world².

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xq5TDv3NL7w>

Finally, space and cyberspace have consolidated as strategic domains through the militarization of space, the deployment of satellites, hypersonic missiles, and cyberattacks against critical infrastructure.

Taken together, *confrontation* is no longer merely military—it is systemic, multidimensional, and permanent, unfolding across a polycentric global chessboard where power, technology, and resources intertwine in the new world order.

2. Latin America as Strategic Terrain

The region is no longer a spectator. It has become *contested* ground. Analysts point to a growing Iranian presence (including Hezbollah and Hamas) shifting from the Southern Cone toward Venezuela and Colombia; China has expanded its influence in infrastructure, technology, and trade across much of the region; Russia, for its part, deploys disinformation campaigns and strengthens aligned actors.

The so-called “*Axis of Disruption*” does not seek traditional partners—it seeks strategic opportunities. Latin America thus faces a historic crossroads: align through ideological affinity or embrace economic pragmatism.

Without regional coordination, states risk becoming pieces in an external game. The return of Donald Trump to the White House does not create turmoil; it exposes it³.

From a global geopolitical and geoeconomic perspective, his leadership style directly influences the country’s strategic positioning

in an increasingly competitive and fragmented international environment.

This requires strengthening responses to disinformation, consolidating trust among allies, and articulating a coherent and predictable foreign policy. The risk lies not in any single individual, but in the ability of the world order to project direction and stability.

In a scenario of great-power competition and advancing authoritarian agendas, a lack of strategic clarity can weaken relative positioning and expand the margin of more cohesive actors.

This is a moment of testing. *There is no room for nostalgia—only for strategic adaptation.* Future stability will depend on the capacity of states, large and small, to reinvent themselves. Institutions must move beyond commenting on reality and begin transforming it.

Political realism is no longer optional: ignoring this paradigm shift could mean awakening in a world where freedom no longer sets the rules.

3. Latin America in the Era of Trump II

With the second presidency of Donald Trump, Latin America faces significant diplomatic, economic, and strategic tensions.

Panama Canal: Donald Trump has openly vowed to “take back” the Panama Canal, criticizing how the U.S. transferred control to Panama and raising concerns about Chinese influence in the region.

But the Torrijos-Carter Treaties—firmly guarantees Panama’s sovereignty. Panama’s stance is unequivocal: the canal is

³ How to Contain Trump, www.360geopolitica.org

Panamanian, and it will remain neutral, secure, and open to the world.

Mexico: Relations between Mexico and the United States have been marked by strict migration policies, trade pressure, and security. Trump has tightened border controls and conditioned cooperation on Mexico's containment of migrants and its fight against organized crime, generating tensions and debates over sovereignty and human rights.

Additionally, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) will be reviewed in 2026, and Trump's doubts about its benefits create uncertainty and pressure for renegotiation.

Nicaragua: Relations with Nicaragua are characterized by strong diplomatic and economic tension due to allegations of human rights violations, corruption, and democratic backsliding under Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo.

Trump has maintained and expanded sanctions against officials and entities, restricted trade flows, and denounced the regime's authoritarianism, also identifying Nicaragua as *a key narcotrafficking route* due to a lack of security cooperation.

The policy continues the hardline stance of his first term, now with more severe measures. On migration, his administration has sought to limit benefits such as Temporary Protected Status (TPS), triggering legal disputes in the United States.

Through this pressure, Washington aims to force political change, restore democratic norms, and strengthen its regional influence.

Cuba: Cuba has received support from Russia and Venezuela in energy and finance, but this has *not produced* structural transformation or sustainable growth.

Despite economic and commercial pressure from the United States, internal problems—low productivity, centralization, lack of diversification, and limited openness—preexisted and persist, exacerbating shortages, blackouts, and the deterioration of public services.

Reports of conversations between Marco Rubio and the Castro family point to a possible regime change on the island.

Southern Cone: Trump's relationship with the region is dual and strategic. He has strengthened ties with ideologically aligned governments, promoting right-leaning alliances and commercial and security coordination vis-à-vis China, reflected in presidential summits and agreements on strategic minerals.

At the same time, he maintains tensions with governments of different orientations and faces growing competition with China, fragmenting regional diplomacy and forcing complex negotiations with states that retain strong ties to Beijing.

Panama defends its sovereignty over the canal; Mexico faces intense migration and security pressures; Cuba endures isolation and strict sanctions; and the Southern Cone experiences a mix of strengthened alliances with aligned governments and tensions with others and with China.

The United States employs political, economic, and security tools to protect its strategic interests, creating a complex landscape of

negotiations, disputes, and regional resistance that will shape inter-American relations in the coming years.

4. The Venezuelan Case

On January 28, 2026, Secretary of State Marco Rubio presented before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee the Trump administration's strategy for Venezuela following the capture of dictator Maduro on January 3. Rubio outlined a three-phase plan to support the country's political and economic transition toward a more stable and democratic system.

The **first phase**, focused on stabilization, aims to prevent Venezuela from *"descending into chaos"* after Maduro's capture. This stage prioritizes securing critical infrastructure—especially the oil sector—and implementing a *"quarantine"* strategy that includes the seizure and sale of sanctioned oil, with revenues allocated to essential public services.

The **second phase**, recovery, seeks to reactivate the Venezuelan economy by opening space for participation by U.S., Western, and other international companies in the oil industry and broader markets. It also contemplates *political and social reconciliation* measures, such as amnesty for political prisoners and the return of exiles, with the goal of strengthening civil society and rebuilding institutions.

The **third phase**, transition, is designed to guide Venezuela toward long-term political change, aiming to establish free and fair democratic processes and governance reforms.

Rubio noted that this transition could extend over several years and that elements of the three phases may overlap depending on internal conditions.

5. The Colombian Case

Colombia is experiencing its most severe humanitarian and human rights crisis since the mid-2000s. Since 2022, massacres, forced displacements, and targeted killings have increased.

Violence has returned and expanded even into territories that had stabilized after the 2016 peace agreement. Under Gustavo Petro's "Total Peace" policy, reduced state pressure has allowed criminal groups to regroup and expand. They now exert territorial control in roughly 65% of municipalities and across 70% of Colombia, with an estimated force of at least 27,000 members.

According to the United Nations Office in Drugs (UNODC), Colombia continues to be by far the world's leading producer and exporter of cocaine [for the third consecutive year].

Strategically, illegal armed groups and organized crime have become key partners of Petro and his allies, wielding territorial control and coercive power to actively shape and sway support in Colombia's legislative and presidential elections. The main victims are women, children, ethnic minorities, judicial officials, political opponents, and journalists.

Organizations such as the Colombian Ombudsperson's Office, the United Nations, the European Union, Human Rights Watch, and independent research Think tanks such as 360° Geopolítica agree that the state's capacity to guarantee fundamental rights has significantly deteriorated since 2022.

Internationally, relations between Colombia and the United States became strained after Washington decided to decertify President Petro due to rising coca cultivation and cocaine production, and to include him and members of his circle on the so-called Clinton List of the U.S. Treasury—a measure framed by the United States within its anti-drug policies, *not as* an attack on Colombia as a country.

Following Maduro's capture, Gustavo Petro secured a meeting with Donald Trump, marking an effort to ease a year of intense bilateral tensions stemming from the Maduro-Petro strategy.

Before traveling to the U.S., Petro authorized his *first* ELN airstrike in over three years in Catatumbo and extradited Andrés Felipe Marín Silva (“Pipe Tuluá”) to the United States, signaling a *swing* in security and judicial cooperation.

This implied distancing from Maduro, shifts in energy policy, and acknowledgment that “Total Peace” has strengthened criminal groups.

Domestic critics argue his main goal may be to finish his term without U.S. sanctions or legal repercussions amid ongoing allegations of irregular campaign financing.

6. Internal Transformations: Security and Pragmatic Governance

Latin America is undergoing a profound political and strategic transformation.

After two decades of the so-called “*Pink Tide*,” the regional axis no longer revolves exclusively around ideological projects, but around a clear citizen demand: *order, security, and economic stability*.

Power is realigning rapidly, and legitimacy is increasingly measured by tangible results.

6.1 Central America: Epicenter of the New Paradigm

Central America has become the laboratory for the continent's most *forceful security policies*. The priority is no longer doctrinal affiliation, but the state's effective capacity to regain territorial control and reduce violence.

6.2 Costa Rica: Continuity and a Clear Mandate

In February 2026, Laura Fernández Delgado was elected president of Costa Rica in the first round with nearly 48% of the vote, representing the ruling Sovereign People Party. Her victory reinforces the tough-on-security agenda of Rodrigo Chaves and reflects public support for strict security policies.

With a majority in the Legislative Assembly, the new government has room to advance structural reforms without parliamentary deadlock.

6.3 The “Bukele Model” and Its Regional Expansion

The immediate reference point is Nayib Bukele in El Salvador (91.1% approval rating), whose strategy of direct confrontation against gangs since 2019—through mass arrests and mega-prison complexes—drastically reduced homicide rates, albeit amid criticism over arbitrary detentions and human rights violations.

His “*model*” has inspired similar measures in Guatemala and Honduras: stricter prison

regimes, transfers to maximum-security facilities, and expanded police powers.

In Guatemala, this has triggered prison riots and attacks against officials and security forces; in Honduras, President Nasry Asfura faces the challenge of breaking historical ties between politics and drug trafficking.

In both countries, the population prioritizes security despite democratic tensions, reflecting the fragile relationship between security and governance.

7. Elections and Pragmatic Shifts (2025-2026)

The shift toward conservative and pragmatic leadership consolidated in 2025. Analysts note that voters increasingly prioritize economic stability, crime control, and governmental effectiveness over rigid ideological identities.

Recent examples:

- **Ecuador:** Reelection of Daniel Noboa.
- **Bolivia:** Victory of Rodrigo Paz.
- **Argentina:** Victory of Javier Milei.
- **Chile:** Victory of José Antonio Kast.

7.1 Key Elections in 2026: Colombia, Peru, Brazil, and the United States

Colombia: Legislative elections will be held on March 8, accompanied by three inter-party primaries, followed by presidential elections in May and likely a runoff in June.

The race is unfolding in a highly polarized environment, with security as one of the central issues in public debate. President Petro's "Total Peace" policy has

generated controversy, as it has strengthened organized crime and illicit economies across 70% of the national territory.

For the first presidential round on May 31, a wide field of candidates—around fifteen—is expected, including at least five figures close to Petro's political circle.

Unfortunately, Petro's Elections strategy rests on 3 pillars: undermining the constitutional authority of electoral institutions; securing logistical and political backing for his candidates from criminal groups operating under the cover of the "Total Peace" policy; and heading the most corrupt administration in fifty years, able to buy public [national and international] opinion at will.

Peru: General elections will take place on April 12, 2026, following a prolonged cycle of institutional instability, with eight presidents in the past ten years. The presidential race is highly fragmented, with more than 36 candidates, including Rafael López Aliaga, Keiko Fujimori, Carlos Álvarez, George Forsyth, César Acuña, José Williams, Alfredo Barnechea, Ricardo Belmont, and Verónica Mendoza.

Vote fragmentation makes a runoff on June 7 highly likely. The Congress of the Republic will also be renewed.

Brazil: Presidential elections are scheduled for October 4, 2026, with a possible runoff on October 25. The National Congress of Brazil and state governorships will also be renewed.

Main candidates include Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Workers' Party), Flávio

Bolsonaro (Liberal Party), Romeu Zema (New Party), Rui Costa Pimenta (Workers' Cause Party), Aldo Rebelo (Christian Democracy), and Renan Santos (Mission Party). The composition of the new Congress will be decisive for public policy implementation.

United States: Midterm elections will be held on November 3, 2026, with the renewal of the United States House of Representatives (435 seats), one-third of the United States Senate (33 + 2 seats), and governorships in several states.

According to the latest polls—like those that predicted Democratic victories in the 2024 presidential election—the House would return to Democratic control following the longest government shutdown in U.S. history.

Ultimately, it is Trump's political agenda that is at stake.

8. Fragmentation of Sovereignty and Criminal Governance

Latin America is facing a loss of state control in critical territories and growing global geoeconomic competition.

Institutional weakness, political polarization, and the consolidation of illicit economies have enabled essential state functions – territorial control, legitimate coercion, and economic regulation – to be assumed by transnational criminal actors (illegal armed groups and organized crime).

8.1 Hybrid Model and Criminal Actors

Nicaragua, Cuba, Colombia, and Venezuela present cases of co-governance with illegal armed groups and organized crime.

Main actors: Cartel de los Soles, Tren de Aragua [both Maduro-Petro regimes denied their existence], Mexican cartels, ELN, FARC dissidents (Segunda Marquetalia), Clan del Golfo, and other paramilitary groups who are part of Petro's "Total Peace deal".

Manifestations:

- Geopolitical and geoeconomic financing of the Venezuelan regime (USD 2.7 trillion)⁴.
- Territorial control by criminal groups.
- Self-sustaining illicit economies.
- Capture of local authorities.
- Parallel regulation of conflicts.

The "Total Peace" policy has empowered criminal organizations in Colombia: they control nearly 70% of the territory, have expanded their forces, and amassed vast fortunes through Petro's 2022 "La Picota Pact"—all without giving anything back to Colombia. Yet they remain Petro's main partners in the legislative and presidential elections.

8.2 Organized Crime as a Geoeconomic and Geopolitical Actor

- Criminal organizations operate as transnational systems: drug trafficking, smuggling, illegal mining and logging, human trafficking, and money laundering, among others.

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xq5TDv3NL7w>

- They actively participate in the regional economy, distorting markets and creating dependency in strategic territories.
- Their presence across 70% of Colombian territory, in Venezuela, and along both countries' borders has enabled criminality to expand throughout the region.
- In Colombia, they call on people to vote for Gustavo Petro's political project.
- They wield political influence in several countries in the region.

8.3 The Amazon and Patterns of Regional Vulnerability

The Amazon Basin concentrates state weakness, illicit economies, and environmental risk.

River corridors facilitate the transport of drugs, prostitution (including child exploitation), minerals, and timber. Territorial competition leads to extreme violence and the displacement of Indigenous communities.

Petro's partners in the "Total Peace" policy control large portions of the territory.

8.4 Other Countries with Similar Vulnerabilities: Mexico, Nicaragua, Cuba, Ecuador, Brazil, and Bolivia

- Militarization without deep institutional reform.
- Fragmented and short-term responses.
- Persistence of structural illicit economies.

- Political polarization [fueled by the left] limits strategic continuity.

9. Private Sector and Goeconomic Power

Strategic industries in Latin America - mining, agribusiness, energy, technology, telecommunications, transport and logistics, aerospace, pharmaceuticals, defense, cybersecurity, finance and banking, water resources and water management, and renewable energy - constitute essential levers of influence over governments and public policy, shaping the region's goeconomic position.

The concentration of resources and value chains in foreign corporations generates economic dependency, while illicit actors add risk and complexity to the goeconomic environment.

The local private sector faces structural obstacles: insufficient infrastructure, bureaucracy, political and economic volatility, limited access to financing, corruption, and unequal competition with multinational corporations.

Despite this, it remains a critical engine of growth, innovation, and technological modernization, playing a central role in strategic autonomy and regional goeconomic power.

10. Global Perceptions of Latin America

Perceptions of Latin America on the global stage are multiple, heterogeneous, and often shaped by historical, economic, and cultural stereotypes.

- Asia: Perceptions of Latin America in Asia are diverse but can be

summarized through general trends marked by strategic and economic interests.

In East Asian powers such as China, Japan, and South Korea, the region is viewed as a supplier of essential raw materials—soybeans, coffee, copper, lithium, oil—and as an emerging market with high growth potential. China incorporates it into its global projection strategy through investment in infrastructure and energy, while Japan and South Korea prioritize technological and trade cooperation.

On a cultural level, knowledge about Latin America remains limited, although elements such as music, football, and societies perceived as warm and expressive are recognized.

At the same time, international media often project images of inequality or instability. In Southeast Asian countries such as the Philippines, cultural affinity is more evident, while in regions such as South Asia, including India, interest tends to focus on the most visible economies, such as Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina.

Clear regional differences exist: East Asia maintains a strategic and academic focus; Southeast Asia shows curiosity and openness to cooperation; South Asia recognizes structural similarities; and West Asia values the region more for its role in energy and trade than for its culture. Overall, Asia increasingly perceives Latin America as a relevant actor in

strategic resources and emerging markets, although deep cultural knowledge continues to expand.

- Arab world: A distant partner, valued in trade and agricultural/energy cooperation; often associated with episodes of urban violence. Iran shows a strong interest in expanding its influence.
- Africa: A perception of solidarity, based on South-South cooperation and mutual recognition of shared challenges and opportunities.
- Europe: Recognizes cultural richness and diversity, though stereotypes of violence and inequality persist.
- North America: Canada shows interest in trade, migration, social innovation, and technological cooperation.
- Latin America itself: An introspective perspective—cultural pride, biodiversity, and human capital, combined with self-criticism regarding inequality and economic dependency.

This dual perspective—external and internal—creates a network of representations that influences diplomacy, trade, and cultural policies in the region.

- The European Union: The EU maintains a broad network of delegations in Latin America and the Caribbean, similar to embassies and coordinated by the European External Action Service.

These offices manage political dialogue, development cooperation, trade, and the promotion of European values, linking European institutions with governments, regional organizations, and civil society.

In South America (Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Chile, and Peru), the focus is on technical cooperation, institutional strengthening, trade agreements, and academic, scientific, and cultural exchanges.

In Central America (Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Panama), the EU promotes regional integration, inclusive development, democratic governance, and security and resilience projects.

In North America and the Caribbean (Mexico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and several island states), it coordinates programs on climate change, sustainable economy, and vulnerability reduction.

Geopolitically, the EU seeks to consolidate global influence, secure access to markets and strategic resources, and promote European standards in democracy, human rights, and sustainability, reinforcing its soft power.

However, its reach within civil society is limited, benefiting primarily far-left actors, while its influence is concentrated among governments and elites—highlighting the tension between geopolitical ambition and the

pursuit of legitimacy in a complex, competitive region.

11. Strategic Conflicts and Geopolitics

11.1 Russia-Ukraine

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 triggered sanctions by the European Union and the United States, reconfigurations of energy routes, military and humanitarian assistance to Kyiv, and growing global polarization.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, most countries have expressed solidarity with Ukraine, though with nuances. While some governments openly support Kyiv, others maintain neutral positions or call for peace.

However, regimes such as those in Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba, and Colombia have shown closer alignment with Moscow, reflecting specific geopolitical and economic interests that contrast with the broader regional trend.

11.2 Greenland

The issue in Greenland is not Donald Trump. The island is a key geostrategic territory: it controls routes between North America and Europe, hosts the Thule military base for surveillance and deterrence against Russia, and possesses strategic resources such as rare earth elements and uranium.

While Europe and democratic sectors in the United States focus on criticizing Washington or Trump, Russia and China are expanding their military and strategic presence in the Arctic without an *effective* Western response.

At the same time, in Latin America, some regimes such as Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Colombia align with Iran and with groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas, as well as with

Russia and China, consolidating regional networks of influence.

Four years after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the European Union remains dispersed, focused more on internal disputes than on strengthening its capabilities to confront Moscow's and Beijing's assertiveness in a contested global order.

11.3 Israel-Gaza Strip

Latin America perceives the conflict between Israel and the Gaza Strip mainly through a humanitarian and rights-based lens, showing solidarity with the Palestinian civilian population, particularly in left-leaning countries.

At the same time, governments with closer ties to the United States tend to adopt more balanced positions, recognizing Israel's right to security, while regional diplomacy oscillates between calls for dialogue and criticism of military actions.

Under the governments of Maduro and Petro, Venezuela and Colombia have directed their political capital—legitimate or not—toward *supporting* Hamas and Hezbollah, prioritizing alliances with these groups *over* the well-being of the Palestinian, Lebanese, or Iranian people.

11.4 Antarctica

Latin America and the Caribbean play a strategic, scientific, and geopolitical role in Antarctica, mainly through the bases and research activities of Argentina, Chile, and Brazil on climate, glaciers, and biodiversity.

The region contributes to international cooperation and the peaceful use of the continent, supporting expeditions through

key ports and airports and actively participating in scientific diplomacy under the framework of the Antarctic Treaty.

In light of the established presence of global actors such as the United States, China, Russia, and the European Union, as well as the continent's strategic resources—mineral reserves and freshwater—Latin America and the Caribbean still have significant potential to expand their scientific, diplomatic, and strategic influence there. However, this would require improved regional policy coordination to enable more cohesive development.

12. Digital, Scientific, and High-Technology Diplomacy

- Digital diplomacy: Information, trade, education, and cultural platforms present significant potential for development and cooperation.
- Scientific diplomacy: Antarctic projects, renewable energy, biotechnology, and applied neuroscience, among others, offer major opportunities.
- High-technology development: Biotechnology, artificial intelligence, neuroscience, and related fields require further development to strengthen strategic autonomy and global competitiveness.

This area, of great importance to the region, remains significantly underdeveloped.

13. Multilateralism and Regional Alliances

- **United Nations:** Largely symbolic, constrained by the veto powers of permanent members. Recent statements by senior UN officials recognizing “Maduro as the legitimate leader of the Venezuelan people” have further undermined its credibility.

The UN tends to act decisively when right-leaning governments are in power but shows notable lethargy when left-leaning administrations govern.

- **Functional coalitions:** Coordination among the EU, the United States, Canada, and Japan.
- **Military and energy alliances:** NATO and the EU in Europe and the Arctic.
- **Alternative blocs:** Russia, China, and Iran are developing bilateral agreements and spheres of influence that could ultimately divide the region (or deepen existing divisions).

III. General Conclusions

Latin America faces a historic crossroads in an increasingly competitive and fragmented multipolar world. The region is experiencing erosion of sovereignty in critical territories, where criminal groups and illicit economies have consolidated territorial control and geoeconomic power, weakening the state's ability to guarantee security, justice, and economic regulation. This phenomenon is particularly acute in the Amazon and some territories in the whole region, where institutional weakness and structural violence create corridors of strategic and environmental risk.

Political dynamics reflect a pragmatic shift among voters and governments, who prioritize security, economic stability, and effectiveness over traditional ideology. However, the lack of regional coordination and dependence on external actors—China, Russia, Iran, and their networks—threaten states' strategic autonomy and may amplify foreign influence over local decisions and critical resources.

The private sector, along with technological and scientific diplomacy, emerges as a key lever of geoeconomic power and strategic autonomy. Yet structural lag, dependence on foreign capital, and limited innovation capacity constrain regional competitiveness and integration into global value chains.

Strengthening digital, scientific, and technological capabilities is essential to reduce vulnerabilities to external actors and enhance regional resilience.

Latin America also faces an international perception challenge: projecting stability, reliability, and effective governance is crucial to attracting investment, consolidating strategic alliances, and increasing its weight in global geopolitics.

Institutional fragmentation, combined with the expansion of criminal actors and pressure from external powers, demands a comprehensive strategy grounded in political realism, institutional strengthening, technological innovation, and hemispheric cooperation.

In sum, the region must act proactively: reinforce state capacities, articulate internal and external alliances, and ensure security, sustainable development, and strategic

autonomy. The absence of coordinated action not only threatens sovereignty but could entrench cycles of dependency, violence, and territorial loss of control, limiting Latin America's ability to adapt and compete in the new world order.

IV. Strategic Conclusions

Latin America stands at a critical juncture within a competitive multipolar world order marked by the assertiveness of Russia, China, and Iran. The region is no longer a mere spectator: strategic territories such as the Amazon and Central America show erosion of sovereignty, expansion of illicit economies, and the presence of criminal actors that limit state capacity to ensure security, justice, and territorial control.

The political landscape reflects a pragmatic shift: citizens and governments prioritize security, economic stability, and effective results over traditional ideologies. However, institutional fragmentation and dependence on external actors generate vulnerabilities, opening space for geoeconomic and military influence by foreign powers over local decisions and strategic resources.

Strengthening the private sector, technological and scientific diplomacy, and autonomy in strategic resources are essential levers for regional competitiveness and resilience. The region must project stability, reliability, and effective governance to consolidate alliances, attract investment, and increase its weight in global geopolitics.

In essence, Latin America requires a comprehensive strategy based on political realism, hemispheric coordination,

institutional strengthening, and technological innovation. Without proactive action, the region risks consolidating cycles of violence, dependency, and territorial loss of control, compromising its security, sustainable development, and strategic autonomy in the new world order.

Bogotá, Colombia, February 25, 2026.