

A New Hemispheric Defense Pact to Wage the Second Cold War Underway with China

Sean MAXWELL¹

Recibido: 26 de febrero de 2021; Aceptado: 7 de abril de 2021

Maxwell, Sean. "A new hemispheric defense pact to wage the second cold war underway with China".

Hemisferio Revista del Colegio Interamericano de Defensa 7 (2021): 101-1023.

Abstract

China is on the march. Within the Chinese concept of warfare and considering the strategic nature of her economic engagement around the world –including the Western Hemisphere, it seems that we have already been in a Second Cold War for many years, though not aware of it. It is time for freedom-loving countries in the hemisphere to stand together against the Chinese. The Rio Treaty (1947) has broadly been regarded as a failure, due largely to perceptions of the United States' (US) neglect and tendency toward intervention. However, this may be an opportune time to renew and refresh this military pact; there has been a consistent maturation of stable democracy in most countries of the hemisphere, marked by such measurable signs of progress as civil-military relations codified in defense white papers. Now is the time to expand the role of military diplomacy.

Resumen

China está en marcha. Dentro del concepto chino de la guerra, y considerando la naturaleza estratégica de su compromiso económico en todo el mundo, incluido el hemisferio occidental, parece que ya hemos estado en una Segunda Guerra Fría durante muchos años, aunque no estábamos conscientes de eso. Es hora de que los países del hemisferio amantes de la libertad se enfrenten juntos a los chinos. El Tratado de Río (1947) ha sido considerado generalmente como un fracaso, debido principalmente a las percepciones del abandono y la tendencia a la intervención de Estados Unidos. Sin embargo, este puede ser un momento oportuno para renovar y refrescar este pacto militar; ha habido una consolidación constante de la democracia estable en la mayoría de países del hemisferio, marcada por signos de progreso tan medibles como las

¹ Commander Maxwell recently retired from the US Navy following 28 years as a Surface Warfare Officer and Foreign Area Officer. He spent thirteen years serving in Europe and Israel prior to completing his master's at IADC in 2020 as a member of Class 59. He is currently pursuing civilian employment in the area of foreign affairs and national defense

relaciones cívico-militares codificadas en libros blancos de defensa. Ahora es el momento para ampliar el papel de la diplomacia militar.

Keywords: China; Second Cold War; Monroe Doctrine; Democratic Values; Rio Treaty

Palabras claves: China; Segunda Guerra Fría; Doctrina Monroe; Valores democráticos; Tratado de Rio

Introduction

Shortly after establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the organization's first Secretary General, Lord Ismay, famously defined the purpose of the alliance to "[k]eep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down."¹⁹⁴ This fairly encapsulated the strategic imperatives in the early days of the Cold War, in which the Soviet Union threatened the world, and especially Europe, with further spread of a totalitarian ideology that was anathema to any democratic nation upholding human rights and individual freedoms.

Now we see a trend, begun shortly after the Soviet one ended, of a totalitarian regime in China that indeed has already long considered itself in conflict with the US, heading inexorably toward a new Cold War. While China's activities around the world have primarily been economic in nature and have avoided military adventures, we should be under no illusions about the regime's ambitions of world domination at the expense of democratic norms prized especially in the West. I will deduce China's hostile intent from analysis of their mentality and the nature of their activities. No surprise, then, that China is pushing questionable territorial rights on her neighbors and has become increasingly assertive.

As a counterweight to this effort in an increasingly bipolar Cold War environment, collective security pacts around the globe will need to reevaluate their objectives. Having established the problem, this article will consider the best strategy for the Western

¹⁹⁴ "A History of NATO: 'Keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down' - New Cold War: Know Better", <https://newcoldwar.org/history-nato-keep-russians-americans-germans/>.

Hemisphere. For its part, a pivot to the inter-American system under the umbrella of the Organization of American States (OAS) and a reinvigorated Rio Treaty could serve like NATO in the first Cold War. Geostrategically, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the US and Canada can stand as a bulwark against future Chinese military encroachments into the West. If they stand together against the threat, these states can form a wall of

freedom fighters. This Second Cold War is not lost, nor need be, to the dictatorship with more people, any more than the first one was.

There are historical challenges to this notion of an empowered defense pact in the Western Hemisphere, as many in LAC distrust the US due to a history of interventionism in the region, and a failure to put the interests of LAC states ahead of European allies. However, important changes in the region suggest that now is a good time to breathe new life into this treaty arrangement. Most notably, the majority of LAC states have democratized and created a legal framework for civil-military relations, making the instability of military coups less likely. The impetus for US intervention has mostly dissipated, so the US should consider declaring a new corollary to the Monroe Doctrine that emphasizes collective effort as coequals.

The Inevitable New Cold War With China

There is a persistent chorus of opinion that the Chinese pose no threat to the West or anyone. They have not undertaken military adventures around the world, as have many “free” societies, and they have not expressed interest in dominating anything outside their own neighborhood.¹⁹⁵ Outside their region, their interests are strictly economic and political, thus presumably benign.¹⁹⁶ China has not developed tremendous power projection capabilities that pose a real military threat to the US or other major powers.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ Denny Roy, “China Is Not a Threat to US Liberty or Democracy”, Asia Times, October 28, 2020, <https://asiatimes.com/2020/10/china-is-not-a-threat-to-us-liberty-or-democracy/>.

¹⁹⁶ Andrés Malamud, “América Latina y el mundo: dependencia, desacople, dispersión”, *Promesas incumplidas: América latina hoy*, eds. Michael Shifter y Bruno Binetti (Washington DC: Inter-American Dialogue, 2019), 107-111.

¹⁹⁷ Amitai Etzioni, “Why a Rising China Isn’t as Dangerous as Experts Make It Out to Be”, *Text, The National Interest* (The Center for the National Interest, March 7, 2020), <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-rising-china-isnt-dangerous-experts-make-it-out-be-130337>.

China's activities are much more coordinated and ominous than these thinkers have suggested. While economic competition hardly justifies imposing international sanctions, this growing power is engaging in activities around the world clearly contrary to those states' interests in the long run, unless they wish someday to take orders from a totalitarian regime. I will elucidate this hostile intent from China based on four considerations:

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- 1) **The Chinese concept of warfare** – war for the Chinese is limited only by one's imagination, so it appears that the *Second Cold War has already been underway since the beginning of the millennium*, and we just did not know it.
 - 2) **China's profound penetration** – China's tentacles have reached deeper into the heart of US and other societies than most people realize.
 - 3) **The strategic thrust of China's commerce** – Most of China's economic activity has been strategically targeted at acquiring the resources needed to *dominate the world*.
 - 4) **The exponential growth of Chinese military capability** – In fact, the size, scope, and capability of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is expanding at an explosive rate that threatens to dominate the West by the second half of this century or sooner.

1. The Chinese Concept of Warfare

“Be subtle! Be subtle! And use your spies for every kind of business.”¹⁹⁸ SunTzu's words are believed to have been recorded more than 2,500 years ago. Over the millennia until today, the Chinese mindset is to use planning, information and deception to conduct warfare without merely relying upon kinetic operations to conquer and dominate. As recently as 1999, Chinese theorists posited the sky is the limit on effective

¹⁹⁸ Giles, *Sun Tzu on the Art of War*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315030081>.

ways to conduct warfare, from media and information warfare to financial warfare to resource warfare (stealing), etc.¹⁹⁹ Any way of prevailing over one's opponent is legitimate warfare. Thus we must see warfare as greatly transcending the military – meaning every Chinese foray into another state's economy is akin to a military intervention. Such a broad statement could be problematic considering the level of interdependence in Western economies, so determining hostile intent becomes crucial. China has demonstrably hostile intentions toward Western democratic nations. How do countries become convinced of that?

There are many who are suspicious that COVID-19 originated from a Wuhan laboratory.²⁰⁰ It is conceivable based on their doctrine that Chinese authorities deliberately

leaked it in an effort to weaken her adversaries, or at least strove to turn an accident to their advantage at their enemies' expense. We must challenge our complacent assumptions that China's activities are natural efforts, as of any state, to grow its economy and be politically relevant in the world. We should urgently consider whether we have already been in a Cold War with China for decades. So, the Chinese are coming, or are they already "here?"

2. China's Profound Penetration

Chinese activities span the globe, and all are relevant, but beyond the scope of my analysis. In the region of my focus, the Western Hemisphere, much has been written about the growth in Chinese engagement over the last two decades; there is no need to repeat it in fulsome detail but suffice it to say that Chinese experts have proudly characterized their own engagement with LAC countries as "leapfrogging."²⁰¹ Both sides

¹⁹⁹ Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare* (Beijing: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House Arts, 1999): 51-56, http://unec.net/of_interest/countries_against_us/communist_china_unrestricted_warfare.htm.

²⁰⁰ Jim Geraghty, "The Wuhan Lab-Leak Hypothesis Goes Mainstream", *National Review* (blog), January 4, 2021, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2021/01/the-wuhan-lab-leak-hypothesis-goesmainstream/>.

²⁰¹ Zheng Bingwen, Sun Hongbo and Yue Yunxia, "The Present Situation and Prospects of China-Latin American Relations: A Review of the History since 1949", *China - Latin America Relations: Review and Analysis*. (Paths International, 2012): 5-15.

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of the trade balance between China and LAC have shown enormous growth. The tremendous depth of that activity, particularly in the US, bears mention more than the breadth. The Chinese have woven themselves into the very fabric of hemispheric societies.

One key battleground of this war is academia. A study of federal government records recently found that at least \$88 million had been passed to prestigious US universities over six years from organizations tied to the PLA alone, some of which have been tied to numerous cyber-attacks and acts of espionage.²⁰² In this way, China's military has gained access to much of its rival superpower's brain trust. Overall, billions have passed to US universities from other elements of the Chinese government, but ultimately, all roads lead to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).²⁰³

Many US corporations refuse to criticize the CCP as a condition of their extensive business deals in China, including Disney, who thanked agencies involved in interning Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang province camps for their support of the movie "Mulan."²⁰⁴

US government efforts to criticize Chinese unfair trade practices, the crackdown in Hong Kong, and human rights violations have been undermined by high-profile US firms that have distanced themselves from the criticism, such as the National Basketball Association and Apple.²⁰⁵

Even the very levers of power have come into question. In late November 2020, a Chinese political scientist bragged that the Chinese had had significant leverage in the top circles of US power from the early 1990s until 2016. He seemed to suggest they had

²⁰² , "Organizations Linked to Chinese Military Are a Cash Cow for American Colleges," *Washington Free Beacon* (blog), January 11, 2021, <https://freebeacon.com/campus/organizations-linked-to-chinese-military-are-a-cash-cow-for-americancolleges/>.

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²⁰⁴ Anders Hagstrom, "Disney Had No Choice but to Work with Oppressive Chinese Authorities to Film 'Mulan,' Executive Says", accessed January 23, 2021, <https://dailycaller.com/2020/10/10/disneymulan-xinjiang-china-uighur/>.

²⁰⁵ "All about the Money": US Companies Tread Carefully with Eye on China's Market", *Washington Examiner*, October 18, 2019, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/all-about-the-money-uscompanies-tread-carefully-with-eye-on-chinas-market>.

significant sway over Wall Street, and even directly noted having bought influence with the new US president through his son.²⁰⁶ Despite that boast, the new President's administration has given the opposite signals, ramping up pressure against China's territorial claims against neighboring countries.²⁰⁷ In partial corroboration of his hints, a US Congressman and several other politicians were caught up in a scandal involving a Chinese spy cozying up to them in the mid-2010s.²⁰⁸ There seems, however, to be bipartisan support for efforts to rein in the Chinese penetration into the US economy. Those will need to be extensive, as Chinese companies (controlled by the CCP) have for years been procuring controlling interests in a great number of US food companies, energy companies, steel companies, and many other strategic interests in a leading economy.²⁰⁹

Around the Western Hemisphere, a similar pattern has been followed, and has sometimes exceeded that in the US. By China's own counting, the CCP has established party-to-party relationships with 80 political parties in LAC, something that still cannot happen so openly in the US. There have been over 90 visits of LAC heads of state and parliamentary leaders to China since 2000, and Chinese leaders have visited at least 20 countries. More than 100 cultural exchange programs have been undertaken between

China and LAC.²¹⁰ The Chinese Communist regime has sunk its teeth deeply into the leadership and academia of LAC. Our hemisphere also gives us prime examples of the strategic nature of China's economic engagement.

²⁰⁶ Emily Jacobs, "Top Chinese Professor Boasts of Operatives in Top of US 'Core Inner Circle,'" *New York Post* (blog), December 8, 2020, <https://nypost.com/2020/12/08/professor-claims-china-has-people-in-americas-core-inner-circle/>.

²⁰⁷ Michael Snyder, "In Just a Few Days, Biden Has Brought the U.S. Much Closer to a War with China", *The Economic Collapse* (blog), January 26, 2021, <http://theeconomiccollapseblog.com/in-just-a-few-days-biden-has-brought-the-u-s-much-closer-to-a-war-with-china/>.

²⁰⁸ Felix Allen, "Congressman Eric Swalwell Refuses to Say If He Had Sex with Chinese Spy Fang Fang", *The US Sun*, December 9, 2020, <https://www.the-sun.com/news/1938675/fang-fang-eric-swallowrefuses-say-sex-chinese-spy-classified/>.

²⁰⁹ Michael Snyder, "Chinese Supremacy – a Scary Reality," *Guyaneseonline*, (blog), June 8, 2013, <https://guyaneseonline.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/chinese-supremacy-a-scary-reality.pdf>.

²¹⁰ Zheng, Sun and Yue, "Prospects of China-Latin American Relations," 6-7.

3. The Strategic Thrust of China's Commerce

While China's engagement in LAC and elsewhere has been mostly economic, we shall consider where that effort has been directed, and what the implications may be. My purpose is to show a preponderance of evidence that the *nature* of that activity is not benign. In 2015, China launched its "Made in China 2025" program with the goal of dominating ten selected industries by 2025, which revealingly include: pharmaceuticals, telecommunications, cars, information technology, robotics, and other strategic manufacturing; sadly, the plan is on track.²¹¹ China's President Xi has declared that China intends to be a global leader and set up a China-centric "stable international order" by 2049, so we must take them at their word about their intent.²¹²

Some notable aspects of the strategic nature of China's engagement in the region are: a) *access to vital resources*, b) *control of key infrastructure*, c) *technology transfer to China*, d) *cooperation with LAC powers to exclude and replace the US*, and e) *displacement of the US in the arms trade*.

a. Access to Critical Resources. The greatest engine of the "Latin American Decade" (2003-2013) was Chinese demand for commodities. The main cause of the painful fall suffered by much of LAC around 2014-2015 was a collapse of global prices of the same when China's economy slowed, and a failure to diversify those economies.²¹³ The vast majority of China's trade with LAC has been in these raw materials, though other commerce has been extensive, and critics hold China partly responsible for serving as a sort of free wet bar at an alcoholism clinic. If that is an unfair criticism, it is uncontested that China has worked hard to foster these trade routes to ensure access to key natural resources. That access motivates China to create a sense of obligation to

China in LAC states should they later be in open conflict with the US – and to deny the US the same access.

²¹¹ "The Threat", *China Tech Threat* (blog), accessed January 18, 2021, <https://chinatechthreat.com/thethreat/>.

²¹² Hal Brands, "What Does China Really Want? To Dominate the World", *Bloomberg*, May 20, 2020, <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2020-05-20/xi-jinping-makes-clear-that-china-s-goal-is-to-dominate-the-world>.

²¹³ José Antonio Ocampo, "Tiempos de Incertidumbre", *Finanzas y Desarrollo* 52, no. 3 (September 2015): 6–11.

b. Control of Vital Infrastructure. It may seem altruistic for China to fund infrastructure projects that countries desperately need, but their price is high. Under the Belt and Road Initiative, China has flashed a great deal of money and sent labor to construct a significant amount of LAC infrastructure, such as railroad and maritime port infrastructure.²¹⁴ China funded a transcontinental railway from Brazil to Peru's Pacific coast to enable Brazilian soy imports to China. China dedicated \$7 billion for their companies to build two hydroelectric facilities and modernize a railway in Argentina, initially holding up financing for the hydroelectric facilities when the railway work was delayed, but eventually all the funds and work proceeded.²¹⁵ While the Chinese are willing to inject money, their own interests come first (here, transport of goods to China), and they provide the labor, rather than giving local enterprises employment opportunity and experience.

c. Technology Transfer. China has indeed “leapfrogged” in her engagement with such LAC countries as Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, Mexico, and Peru.²¹⁶ The Chinese gladly highlight their technological cooperation agreements with ten LAC countries. In the most prominent of those relationships, China and Brazil have jointly launched three earth resource satellites in what they call a “model of high-technology cooperation.”²¹⁷ China is clearly benefiting from the technological strengths of every country that has them. Brazil has been a prominent contributor to the global arms industry with its EMBRAER cluster, and is certainly a country with potential to help them compete with the US in space. The space domain is an obvious realm of high-tech cooperation – literally rocket science – in LAC, but the area of telecommunications is a more insidious Chinese incursion into LAC technology markets. Chinese telecom giants Huawei and ZTE have been invited to install hardware in most of the largest LAC telecoms' networks and have captured a large share of the smartphone and telephony markets. This lucrative

²¹⁴ Malamud, “America Latina y el mundo”: 112-113

²¹⁵ R. Evan Ellis, “China Fills the Vacuum Left by the US in Latin America”, *Perspectives on the Americas: a Series of Opinion Pieces by Leading Commentators on the Region* (August 4, 2014): 2, accessed January 29, 2021, https://www.academia.edu/10379200/China_Fills_the_Vacuum_Left_by_the_United_States_in_the_Americas.

²¹⁶ Zheng, Sun and Yue, 5.

²¹⁷ Zheng, Sun and Yue, 7, quoting former Chinese President Hu Jintao.

business is an ancillary benefit that accrues to the CCP; the intelligence value of this access to communications across the region is a veritable gold mine.²¹⁸

d. Exclusion of the US. Competition with the US is a central theme in China's

LAC engagement. One mechanism through which China partners with Brazil is BRICS. BRICS is a forum that currently includes five leading regional powers with emerging economies that pose a challenge to US primacy via the Washington Consensus – Brazil (for LAC), Russia, India, China, and South Africa.²¹⁹ This group has placed a strong emphasis on reform of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, while standing up a New Development Bank and other complementary institutions.²²⁰ China has succeeded in becoming an unofficial leader of the group, directing development funding toward her priorities foremost, to supplant the US-led world order.²²¹ President Xi of China has made a point of engaging with another initiative more concentrated in LAC – the Community of LAC States (CELAC, for its letters in Spanish), in a series of moves transparently intended to work with LAC countries while excluding the US and Canada.²²²

Indeed, China sells its influence largely by not conditioning aid on recipients' fiscal policies or imposing on their sovereignty – a point of frustration with loans from Washington Consensus institutions such as the IMF and World Bank. While China may have attracted countries in LAC, Africa, and other regions by claiming her aid comes with “no strings attached,” a closer evaluation indicates it is not really so. There is precedent for China to use its leverage from its deals to conduct a far greater assault on a state's sovereignty than Washington Consensus institutions ever undertook. An example from Asia in 2017 shows that China will enforce ownership of facilities it builds when its loans are not repaid, though China often extends them recklessly. When Sri Lanka could not

²¹⁸ R. Evan Ellis. “The Strategic Dimension of Chinese Engagement with Latin America”, *Perry Paper Series*, N.1, (William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, Washington DC, 2013): 51-84.

²¹⁹ Mark Sinsheimer, “Why Was BRICS Established?”, *Quora*, accessed January 29, 2021, <https://www.quora.com/Why-was-BRICS-established?share=1>.

²²⁰ “History of BRICS - BRICS Information Portal”, *BRICS*, accessed January 29, 2021, <http://infobrics.org>.

²²¹ Ellis, “China Fills the Vacuum”, 3.

²²² Ellis, “China Fills the Vacuum”, 1, 3.

pay to maintain a port facility the Chinese built them, their government was forced to hand the port over to China on a 99-year lease.²²³

e. Competition in the Arms Trade.

China has pushed the limits of the US Monroe Doctrine by insinuating itself so fundamentally into LAC society and economic activity, but in no way so boldly as its moves into the US “backyard” with Chinese arms. It is worth recalling that the Cuba Missile Crisis was a peak of tensions in the first Cold War because of the insertion of arms into the US neighborhood, though there was more drama involved due to the nuclear weapons and the proximity of Cuba to the US.

As they have done with commercial development, the Chinese claim a policy less fraught with strings attached to state behavior when extending offers of military cooperation. When LAC regimes have engaged in poor behavior, such as human rights abuses, military-to-military relationships with the US have cooled, and China has surged in to fill those gaps and forge military education ties, among others.²²⁴ So China has become a significant player in the LAC arms trade, and it is worth pointing out the real threat of a future kinetic war with the Chinese.

China has quietly entered the arms trade in LAC, especially through countries most eager to be a thorn in the side of the US – Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Bolivia. President Xi in 2014 sold Venezuela nearly \$500 million in advanced aircraft, assault vehicles, and launchers, and talked with Argentina about co-developing China’s JF17/FC-1 fighter aircraft.²²⁵ China has, in recent years, given or sold military systems to such other countries as Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guyana, Suriname, and various Caribbean island nations.²²⁶ Providing military system support ultimately endows the Chinese with a rich source of intelligence that can be used in a future conflict. But is the Chinese military a real threat?

²²³ Deutsche Welle, “How ‘unconditional’ Is China’s Foreign Aid?”, *DW*, accessed January 31, 2021, <https://www.dw.com/en/how-unconditional-is-chinas-foreign-aid/a-43499703>.

²²⁴ Cynthia Watson, “China’s Use of the Military Instrument in Latin America: Not Yet the Biggest Stick”, *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 66, No. 2 (Spring/Summer 2013): 106-107.

²²⁵ Ellis, “China Fills the Vacuum,” 4.

²²⁶ R. Evan Ellis, “China, America Latina, y el Caribe” (presentation, World Situation Conference, Washington, DC, January 16, 2020).

4. The Rapidly Growing Chinese Military Threat

While the Chinese have avoided military intervention around the world, they have placed a heavy emphasis on building their capabilities so that they will be absolutely dominant in a future conflict. Substantiating the threat requires that China have both a) the *capabilities* and b) the *intent to use* them. Both can be asserted decisively.

a. Capabilities. I will highlight a few areas of development of a rapidly growing capability for the PLA. China's spending on the PLA has increased by 7.5 to 10 percent per year since the year 2000. The Navy (PLA-N) currently has 375 surface ships and 66 submarines and plans to have 550 ships by 2030 – twice what the US has now, with more submarines. Other areas for development include anti-access systems, such as hypersonic missiles and attack submarines; force projection, through perhaps more than 10 aircraft carriers, ballistic missile submarines and bomber aircraft; “stealth” and heavy lift aircraft; construction of new military bases, including two in Pakistan in addition to the Djibouti base opened in 2017; expeditionary capabilities, particularly with amphibious ships; plus such other areas as cyberwar/cyberdefense and a fleet of unmanned vehicles.²²⁷ The PLA has leveraged LAC navies, who have operated with the US Navy (USN), as a means of learning how the USN operates. The information-collection apparatus is extensive and is treated as a whole-of-government and whole-of-society duty in China, and thus not strictly associated with the PLA. Going hand-in-hand with that effort is the cyber threat that China constitutes for the whole world. China has been able to insert herself into the world's networks and not only pose the greatest threat to cybersecurity, but be the worst perpetrator of cyber-attacks.²²⁸ Through the central will of the CCP, the PLA has steadily improved its capabilities to such a point that a senior CCP security official stated in January 2021 that he is confident China will prevail in a prolonged conflict with the US.²²⁹

²²⁷ Ellis, “China, America Latina, y el Caribe”

²²⁸ “About Us”, *China Tech Threat* (blog), accessed February 1, 2021, <https://chinatechthreat.com/about-us/>.

²²⁹ Joel Gehrke, “China's Security Chief Optimistic about Winning ‘Protracted War’ with US,” *Washington Examiner*, January 15, 2021, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/defense-nationalsecurity/chinas-security-chief-protracted-war>.

Unfortunately, the threat is worse than a numerical disadvantage in existing technologies. In the short term, there is concern China has surged forward in development of quantum computing capabilities, which would allow them to crack any encryption used by the US and other adversaries, and combined with advances in artificial intelligence, can quickly dominate a battle space before US or other forces are aware and able to react. Though China is likely years away from any breakthroughs, they are eagerly pursuing any kind of soldier enhancement through DNA alteration. China does not share the US and their allies' ethical scruples about gene alteration, so they will move seamlessly to human testing of any technological advances.²³⁰

b. Intent. In recent years, China has become increasingly assertive in her own neighborhood, pushing dubious territorial claims under international law with little support from other states. The encroachments began toward the south in the 1970s and 1980s, but started moving toward shoals and reefs into the South China Sea in 2012, where China is converting reefs into man-made islands. China has always threatened Taiwan and readiness to prevail in an invasion of the island is paramount. US force presence in Japan has served as a significant deterrent, but that may erode as Chinese capability increases.²³¹ China has even pushed its way up to the table with the eight Arctic powers whose reality is changing in the high north as climate change makes trade routes and natural resources accessible, though China can only claim to be a “near-Arctic State.”^{232 233}

What should Western Hemisphere countries do about it?

The problem set I have presented may seem insurmountable for some in our hemisphere, while even desirable for others. Some in the region have sought out Chinese patronage precisely to counter US influence. Weighing options for the Western

²³⁰ Marisa Herman, “China’s Tech Advancements Pose Threat to US Security”, *Newsmax*, January 15, 2021, <https://www.newsmax.com/platinum/technology-national-security-computing-artificialintelligence/2021/01/15/id/1005793/>.

²³¹ Yoshiki Adachi, “Security Environment in Asia” (presentation, World Situation Conference, Washington, DC, January 14, 2020).

²³² Marisa Herman, “The Coming War Over the Arctic”, *Newsmax*, January 21, 2021, <https://www.newsmax.com/platinum/arctic-war-china-russia/2021/01/21/id/1006616/>.

²³³ Adachi, “Security Environment in Asia”

Hemisphere, I'll consider 1) *whether the (cold) war is already lost*, 2) *what approach the US should take* to unite the hemisphere against the menace, 3) *what may motivate LAC countries to join* the effort, and 4) *why a cooperative defense approach* could be an effective response.

1. Is the Second Cold War Already Lost?

The Second Cold War is worth fighting and far from lost to the US. The disintegration of the Soviet Union was not predicted by any experts even after the Berlin wall came down two years before, and for all its apparently growing strength, China has her own challenges. China's one-child policy has devastated her demographic health, such that demographers expect China's population to shrink and further age. Nearly a

third of the population is over 60, and single-child households have become the societal norm and preference, unlikely to change soon.²³⁴

At the same time, China has been spending money and extending credit with careless abandon. Experts observe credit practices similar to those in the US that led to the 2008 recession and expect a major crash within the next three years. The government has spent considerable money building high-rise housing units in cities across China, many of which stand nearly empty today, as they significantly overestimated how many workers earned sufficient incomes to live in them. Numerous local governments have expenses "off the books." There are no effective laws preventing such schemes hiding the real scale of public expenditures. China is grossly overextended; meanwhile, Chinese businesses are fleeing China.²³⁵

²³⁴ Lily Kuo, "Can China Recover from its Disastrous One-Child Policy?", *The Guardian*, March 2, 2019, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/02/china-population-control-twochild-policy>.

²³⁵ Joe Hoft, "China Expert Peter Zeihan Says China's Collapse on World Stage Is Coming Within Three Years -- Which Backs Up Our Earlier Reports", *The Gateway Pundit* (blog), May 3, 2020, <https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2020/05/china-expert-peter-zeihan-says-chinas-collapse-world-stagecoming-within-three-years-provide-support/>.

Arguably, China's plan depends on controlling the narrative that China is the preferred alternative to the US. At present, soft power is China's only way to succeed in becoming the new global hegemon. However, the Chinese brand has suffered. Following the COVID-19 breakout, leaders from across the globe, from much of Europe to India to Africa to...yes, Brazil, are rebuking the Chinese and refusing to grant them advantage from the pandemic through offers of medical assistance.²³⁶ Even the World Health Organization, much criticized for not holding China responsible for COVID-19, in December expressed grave disappointment in China for obstructing entry of WHO investigators to Wuhan to study the origins of the pandemic.²³⁷

Within LAC, China has certainly succeeded in buying ever more friends. However, the failure of Chinese companies to protect local workers and the environment in their projects has not gone unnoticed by LAC countries, and frustration has grown. Corruption in the process of meeting environmental standards in infrastructure projects led in 2016 to a major scandal and multiple arrests in Costa Rica, and in a separate case, to an environmental disaster in Ecuador, which implicated high-level Ecuadorian

government figures.²³⁸ While such issues have not meaningfully stemmed the tide of Chinese activity in LAC, they do serve as independent reasons for LAC countries to distrust China and could make them open to US overtures going forward.

Finally, within the US, China has become a rare unifier in the unprecedented partisan political climate. Early in the pandemic, a major Chinese biotech firm, CGI Group – tied to the CCP, like all Chinese companies – reached out to Washington and several other US states offering to set up labs for COVID testing. The company was soon revealed to be trying to harvest Americans' biodata. Alarm bells sounded at the local and federal level, and both parties are determined to impede such efforts.²³⁹ The US Congress

²³⁶ Ishaan Tharoor, "Analysis | It's Not Just Trump Who's Angry at China", *Washington Post*, accessed January 17, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/04/14/its-not-just-trump-whos-angrychina/>.

²³⁷ Jamey Keaten, "WHO 'disappointed' at Chinese Delays Letting Experts in", *AP NEWS*, January 5, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/who-china-coronavirus-origins-90ad1b9aaef2967f82486c564cc99c5>.

²³⁸ Ciara Nugent and Charlie Campbell, "The U.S. and China Are Battling for Influence in Latin America, and the Pandemic Has Raised the Stakes", *Time*, accessed February 5, 2021, <https://time.com/5936037/us-china-latin-america-influence/>.

²³⁹ Jon Wertheim, "China's Push to Control Americans' Health Care Future", accessed February 2, 2021, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/biodata-dna-china-collection-60-minutes-2021-01-31/>.

will likely pass legislation in the coming years to disengage China from the US economy and fight back in other ways in the Second Cold War, provided it remains cold. The US must act now to lead the Western Hemisphere.

2. What Posture Should the US Adopt?

There is little chance in the short or medium term of the US winning enough hearts and minds in such countries as Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba to unite them against China. With such countries, the best hope is a long-term demonstration that the US is a better partner. “Strategic patience” is most likely to bear fruit while Communism runs its course in Cuba and various degrees of socialism in other countries. The US is still the predominant trading partner within the hemisphere, despite China’s inroads, and the US has a much longer history, both positive and negative, that has built lasting cultural and familial commonalities.²⁴⁰

A potentially important political step the US may consider is to pronounce a new Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. In 1823, President Monroe became the first power outside Latin America to recognize the Western Hemisphere states that had recently attained independence from Spain and Portugal. While the declaration was driven largely by internal questions regarding the status of slave territories in the US, it has withstood the test of time as a proclamation that the US will regard meddling in the hemisphere by

non-hemispheric countries as contrary to US interests.²⁴¹ In 1904, President Theodore Roosevelt declared his Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, which ostensibly meant to protect Western Hemisphere countries from European malfeasance, but in fact declared the right to intervene in those countries’ affairs when the US deems their behavior uncivilized or counter to US interests.²⁴² What followed was a twentieth century

²⁴⁰ Matt Rivers, “Analysis: China and the US Are Making Pandemic Power Plays in Latin America”, CNN, accessed January 17, 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/08/15/americas/latam-china-us-coviddiplomacy-intl/index.html>.

²⁴¹ Brian Loveman, *No Higher Law : American Foreign Policy and the Western Hemisphere Since 1776* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 40-43.
<http://search.ebscohost.com.nduezproxy.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip.url.uid&db=e000bna&AN=330165&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

²⁴² Loveman, 178-180.

particularly marked by US interventions in Western Hemisphere countries. Most US statesmen understand that the US face in the hemisphere has been marred by those interventions, which is why the term “imperialismo” is so often spoken in the region against any US position an LAC leader dislikes. The irony today is that China’s LAC engagement is much more parallel to nineteenth-century imperialism.

Fortunately, much has changed since the days of regular US invasions in LAC just a few decades ago. Democracy has taken root in LAC like never in the days of Monroe or Roosevelt, or even through most of the twentieth century. In a wave that started in 1978, and especially caught on from 1990, competitively elected democratic regimes have taken hold in most LAC countries, even some with significant histories of authoritarianism, such as Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico, whose democracies have survived periods of economic crisis.²⁴³ Not to overstate the progress, some LAC states suffer a lack of political will to enact their professed democratic values, but deviations from those norms in countries such as Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba, Bolivia, and most recently Haiti, are certainly more the exception than the rule. The commitment to democracy has further advanced with the introduction in most LAC countries of civilian control over the military codified in defense white papers.²⁴⁴ Again, the reality is not always as encouraging as the written policy, but a legal framework exists, and change is evolutionary. With a steady hand of US leadership, these trends can be strengthened in the face of extra-hemispheric threats. Without it, they cannot.

The declaration of commitment to democratic principles dates back to the OAS charter, but that profession of faith often only became manifest post-Cold War.²⁴⁵ The Inter-American Defense Board was created in 1942, and its Inter-American Defense College, established in 1962, has become an accredited and far more prestigious

²⁴³ Mainwaring, Scott P., and Frances Hagopian. “Introduction,” in *The Third Wave of Democratization in Latin America: Advances and Setbacks*, eds. Frances Hagopian and Scott P. Mainwaring (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 1-13.

²⁴⁴ Thomas C. Bruneau, *Ministries of Defense and Civil-Military Relations in a Democracy*, (Valencia: Jose A. Olmeda, 2005), Fragile Democracies in Latin America, 1-17.

²⁴⁵ Organization of American States, Charter of the Organization of American States, at: <http://www.oas.org>.

institution in the last decade than ever before. There, a cadre of mid- to senior-level military and civilian leaders from across the hemisphere join to study principles of defense and security for the region, building networks across the hemisphere enduring the rest of their careers.

In that positive context, it is time for a new Corollary, founded on pan-hemispheric friendship and a declared principle of equality. Understanding that the worst trouble spots in the hemisphere are best addressed collectively and with a “Latin face,” rather than with US intervention, the new Corollary should postulate the US intention to work in collective effort with hemispheric neighbor states, to reject authoritarian regimes and cooperate to eliminate shared threats to stability and security. With this unilateral update to the Monroe Doctrine, turning the page on its interventionist history, the US will forge a new defense pact with any hemispheric neighbors willing to join.

Indeed, the new US administration issuing such a statement, followed by confidence-building measures (such as targeted defense and economic aid), could stem the tide of regional countries turning ever more to China for help with their economic difficulties exasperated by the pandemic. There is a sense in recent years of US apathy toward the region, creating a vacuum that China has filled. If the US chooses to prioritize economic, socio-cultural, defense, and political cooperation in Central and South America, it may regain some ground as the partner of choice.²⁴⁶ It is also important to set a tone of humility and understanding, rather than finger-wagging, about democratic norms, given 1) that our partners in LAC have watched scenes of the imperfections in US democracy on their television screens regularly over the last year, and 2) China is famous for not criticizing – unless criticized. But are LAC countries going to be receptive?

²⁴⁶ Cassandra Garrison, “In Latin America, a Biden White House Faces a Rising China,” US News & World Report, accessed February 5, 2021, <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2020-12-14/inlatin-america-a-biden-white-house-faces-a-rising-china>.

3. Why LAC States May Want to Join the Struggle

LAC states have reason beyond good will toward the US to exclude the Chinese and cooperate against them. For Mexico, cooperation with China has been extensive, but the US has plenty of competitive advantage – Mexico is the US’ largest trading partner in the world, and but for Mexico’s commerce with the US, China would be the largest trading partner for LAC.²⁴⁷ While LAC countries mostly default with practical economic concerns when dealing with China, many are concerned about China’s human rights malfeasance in Hong Kong, Xinjian and elsewhere.²⁴⁸ LAC countries do believe in democratic principles of respect for individual rights, and do not need the US to explain to them how China fails to meet their standards.

Practically, the pocketbook seems to win when at odds with the heart. Shunning a power that comes flush with cash and few questions seems a luxury for rich countries. That said, if LAC countries have practical issues in common, those are criminality and high regional levels of violence. While many LAC countries have forged defense and security networks with the US, China has enabled that criminality. China has contributed to illicit drug production and distribution problems (particularly fentanyl), arms trafficking, money laundering and illegal mining.²⁴⁹

The US may make up ground in the competition by finding innovative approaches to help mitigate those stubborn security challenges. If LAC countries, with US assistance, make real progress addressing those problems at the source, the economic and security benefits will be shared. While these are not military problems, collective defense may be redefined to encompass them without degrading civilian control over the military and causing undue militarization of social problems.

4. Why Revisit the Rio Treaty?

Article 3 of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, commonly called the Rio Treaty, set a high bar for meaningful implementation, by declaring any attack against an American state an attack against all of them, and that bar has not been

²⁴⁷ Garrison.

²⁴⁸ Rebecca Bill Chavez, “Will Latin America Turn Against China Over Human Rights?” The Dialogue, accessed February 5, 2021, <https://www.thedialogue.org/analysis/will-latin-america-turn-against-china-over-human-rights/>.

²⁴⁹ Ellis, “China, America Latina, y el Caribe”

met consistently over nearly three quarters of a century it has been in effect. In the 1980s, given the external debt crisis in LAC (in which the US appeared unhelpful), several US

interventions in the region, and US support for the United Kingdom over Argentina in the Falklands/Malvinas conflict of 1982, many in LAC regarded the treaty as a “dead letter.” Little has changed since then to revitalize the treaty, even following the September 11, 2001 (9/11) attacks, in which case it was invoked, but not all supported it.²⁵⁰

One practice after 9/11 that alarmed Mexico enough to denounce the treaty in 2002 was the apparent redefinition of terrorism essentially to encompass the War on Drugs (“narcoterrorism”), thus seemingly dragging LAC countries into any US initiative somehow connectable to terrorism. “Plan Colombia” stretched the common definition of sovereignty, bringing US troops onto South American soil for the first time in decades.⁵⁹ The US will likely find little enthusiasm in LAC for reinvigorating the Rio Treaty by using it as pretext for combat intervention, even when invited by the government. LAC does desire more US engagement, but few want it in that form.

The problem’s solution is, as usual, in high-quality institutions. Institutions provide effective parameters for action. Just as democratic nations have constitutions to limit powers, treaties function similarly. If the Rio Treaty were amended again to place the right limitations on its members’ actions, it could be employed more effectively for the security of the inter-American system. While the idea of military cooperation as a solution to social and security problems is counterintuitive, I suggest we regard the armed forces as a tool to buttress each state’s sovereignty. When criminal gangs control territory and act unlawfully with impunity, they diminish the state’s sovereignty (not narrowly defined as a military attack on its territory). Thus, a state faced with such a persistent threat could benefit from a mechanism to invoke the treaty.

That assistance need not take the form of combat troops to involve military forces. One area that could be greatly enhanced is information sharing. Throughout much of the hemisphere, the deployment of US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) agents is a longfamiliar reality. How much better could the cooperation be if multiple states engaged

²⁵⁰ Ricardo Sennes, Janina Onuki, and Amacio Jorge de Oliveira, “The Brazilian Foreign Policy and the Hemispheric Security,” *Revista Fuerzas Armadas y Sociedad* 1, no. SE (2006): 3–26. ⁵⁹ Sennes, Onuki, and Oliveira.

similarly to the US with its DEA? Hemispheric symbiosis could be greatly enhanced with the development of a robust intelligence-sharing agency focused on transnational organized crime (TOC). Paramilitary forces akin to the Chilean Carabineros could be deployed in crisis situations where a member state invokes the treaty upon losing sovereign control of part of its territory. Humanitarian assistance on a surge basis to

populations struck by natural disasters or lacking basic health and education services is usually within the capabilities of existing military forces.

The connection of this revitalized Rio Treaty to China extends beyond their complicity in TOC problems, which would likely be reduced by a smaller Chinese footprint in the region. The cold war underway between China and freedom-loving countries may still become a hot one. At some point, the CCP may conclude that their military capability has advanced enough to launch the long-feared invasion of the “breakaway island” of Taiwan, igniting a broader military conflict. When or if China becomes more militarily assertive in the Western Hemisphere, an inter-American system more proficient in multilateral military efforts will be ready to rebuff the totalitarian threat. We should start now building habits that will make the hemisphere a hard target for a more militant China. Military forces in the hemisphere already cooperate, such as with the US through Southern Command, but that is often at the bilateral level. The region could profit from establishing system standards and tactics, techniques, and procedures on a model similar to NATO.

My proposal is not to pass off the China problem to a multinational military organization, but only to fix the largest institutional gap in the inter-American system; the Rio Treaty is the weakest link in the chain today. Indeed, the existing mechanisms of diplomacy within the OAS are needed as much as ever. Political reshaping of OAS objectives as anti-authoritarian, and thus anti-CCP, are also urgent, and may take time to evolve. The vision is for improved coordination of crisis response when a government has difficulty handling it alone in a reasonable time. States already cooperate on these issues, and they cannot be waved away with the creation of a new organization. Reductions in criminality will unavoidably be incremental, as is the creation and inculturation of any institution. The failure of the Rio Treaty’s institutionality is detrimental to all parties. An effective cooperation mechanism would redound to every state that signs on.

The countries of LAC, as the US and Canada themselves, have compromised themselves for Chinese money, but there is still time to reverse the worst of the damage and stand up to the CCP. LAC needs US leadership, and the US needs the help of as many hemispheric partners as possible. Cooperation is a “whole-of-government” effort, and that includes the military.

Conclusions

This analysis has considered the evidence and concluded that the future, and indeed the present, of the world is a Second Cold War between China and the US. As in the First Cold War with the Soviet Union, it is really between the authoritarian state and the “free world.” This conclusion comes from a fusion of 1) the understanding of the Chinese concept of war, which considers every realm of society a domain of warfare – from the economy to information to health; 2) the deep penetration of China into Western societies and economies, buying up vital levers of the economy, education systems, finance, and even government; 3) the strategic nature of their economic activity – inserting themselves into the information-controlling industry of telecommunications, space and other high-technology spheres, transport and energy infrastructure; and 4) the rapid, relentless growth in scale and capability of the Chinese armed forces (PLA), which shows the Chinese are, in fact, preparing to take on the US in combat if necessary to achieve their aims.

How the US and friends in the Western Hemisphere respond to the threat will make a difference in China’s success or failure. While the US has seemingly unified in its opposition to the Chinese threat within its own divided government, LAC states have moved ever closer to China in pursuit of the development money she offers them, supposedly with “no strings attached” – except that the recipients of the aid must align with Communist China’s politics. That move toward China can be attributed somewhat to the vacuum left by the relative US disengagement in the region. Between the US’ absence and history of intervention, real integration across the hemisphere seems an elusive target. Going forward, the US should assert a new Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine – one that replaces the Roosevelt Corollary of 1904 – that rejects interventionism going forward and declares a desire to work collectively as equals toward a more secure Western Hemisphere.

Institutions in the inter-American system function and are needed now more than ever. One of the weakest of those institutions has been the defense pact known as the Rio Treaty. Besides all the economic and political cooperation mechanisms that currently exist in the hemisphere, an effective Rio Treaty could be a force multiplier in containing the threat from China.

Better military coordination in security matters would bring other benefits: intelligence sharing, paramilitary support in crisis situations, disaster relief, and basic services for disadvantaged populations on a surge basis. These efforts would help with the most persistent causes of instability in the hemisphere, and would counter China's malign influence, as China is a notorious irritant in issues associated with TOC, money laundering, and other forms of criminality. Beyond that, more effective coordination on equipment standards and tactics, techniques, and procedures, reinforced with regular multilateral training, would better prepare Rio Treaty members to stand up to the Chinese authoritarian threat when it asserts itself more violently. There is time for a united hemisphere, along with other freedom-loving countries around the world, to prevail in the existential struggle for primacy in the world. It will simply require patience and mutual respect.

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