
What has Happened in Latin America? Understanding the Imperial Counteroffensive

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With the essay *"The imperial geopolitics of the development in Latin America: an overcome model?"*, Cuban researchers Yazmín Bárbara Vázquez Ortiz and Olga Rosa González Martínez, from the Center of Hemispheric Studies and the United States of Havana University have just won the International Prize of Essay Pensar a Contracorriente, in its XVI edition. With talked to them, to understand the imperial avalanche and reconquest in the region, as well as the chances for the left-wing to face this challenge. And we do this at a key moment: when threats of an armed intervention on behalf of the United States or of a fratricidal war, they are enraged with the Bolivarian Revolution of Venezuela.

Which are in bold strokes, the mechanisms that characterize the imperial geopolitical positioning in Latin America, from the perspective of the development?

Yazmín: To speak of the Model of Imperial Geopolitical of Development, we must specify, above all that it's a group of mechanisms that work together, and have not just an economic nature. Although they include the Free Trade Treaties, the Aid Development Programs (with domestic scope like FORTAS and International like those of USAID), those mechanisms applied in the cultural dominance are also essential to understand the reach that have, in the field of dominance and political subversion, the model we are speaking about.

For example, the articulation of messages issued from the media, international consultant, think tanks, and international institutions like the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund, with more or less technical level have in two impact directions. The first one, to discredit the programs, the politics generated from governments or left-wing forces, those who think of a future of human and social development from the socialization of the wealth and power, with transformations that must be done to this purpose, in every geographic levels and structural dimensions and of needed social actions that are transformed in essential processes. The second, aimed at socializing and building up approval about alternative proposals to these on-line with the interests at heart of transnational capital and the imperial project of the United States government.

What's striking about these action guidelines, especially the second one is the way to build approval that uses conceptions (what to understand by development), values (how to guide the individual behavior to achieve it), ideals (what project should the family and society bet to progress) which has as essential objective the dispute of senses for the cultural change. A process that has won over the symbols, speech, and practices that from the left-wing have shown capacity to mobilize society for the political change. Olguita may speak further on how a model of political communication for the cultural change have taken shape from the action of the aforementioned mechanisms and others, more aggressive that are in motion today.

That same way of acting, I assume has been toward the entire region, but taking into account particularities and specific objectives in each country. How has it been expressed especially against the progressive and liberating processes of the region, and among them, against the Bolivarian Revolution?

Yazmín: The particularity that has had the application of these mechanisms in countries with progressive and liberating processes has been, on one side, the insert of a series of instruments that hinder the realization of the development programs, as well as of politics set with this end and on the other hand, the combination of all these with those politics aimed at guaranteeing “the necessary political changes to access development.”

In the first case, beyond the media offensive to damage the reputation of the programs, plans and politics for the development, boycott processes,—economic war (like in Venezuela), the blockade (like in Cuba)—, juridical instruments have been set, sanctions with international reach, manipulation of international institutions, as they did to lower oil prices with OPEC. All of which seeks to create certain lacks of materials and other elements from which later the uneasiness is worked, along with the “need” of change and ideas on how to do it. Very similar to Danny Glover’s statements on the U.S. position towards Venezuela today: I create the problem, I attack you and then I will come to save you. Only that this salvation is designed and conditioned on the needs of the great capital to enter our economies and the United States guarantees an area of geopolitical support against China, Russia and the challenges they impose to the perpetuation of the imperial hegemony.

To the mechanisms that are already articulated to those mentioned seeking to guarantee “the necessary political changes to access development”, have been added those that are included in the promotion of security, as condition of development from the Initiatives for security deployed in the continent. From these last mechanisms it has been worked the criminalization of the social protest, to eliminate those they cannot convince, those who fight against transnationals and their expropriation processes. Likewise, the processes of “institutional strengthening” have worked through actions of “independent” attorney’s offices, in processes of judicialization of politics that invalidates left leaders like Lula, with chances of recovering the government, or the case of Cristina, Correa that during their time in office limited the capacity to expropriate the natural resources in the countries they governed and they impacted in their rescue for the social progress, with nationalizations.

Today we have corporations meddling in government functions and in the mechanisms of alleged integration as the Initiative for Prosperity and Security of the Northern Triangle. The corporation of politics is part of what promotes the Model of Imperial Geopolitics of Development, together with civic and community empowering, but only in the economic area, as labor force or entrepreneurs subordinate to the chains of global value.

A proposal where many and dissimilar actors participate: ranging from agencies and foundations of the United States, think tanks, churches, corporations, among other that act at territorial, national and regional level.

This process promotes since 2017, as part of the actions of the South Command in Latin America, Internet, the coordination of the mechanisms aforementioned by North American military forces. It's part of the scheme applied in Venezuela in an attempt to create approval to legitimate the intervention for the national political change.

After studying this phenomenon, what do you think the left-wing in Latin America can do to face and overcome this challenge?

Olguita: I don't intend this to be a unique answer neither to offer a recipe, I believe the most important thing is that the left-wing comes together, that works in block that makes a balance of its mistakes and that elaborates projections in different areas. Latin America has proven in the last few years that it's not just reaching the government via elections. It's about once the Executive Power is attain a process of revolutionary radicalization must occur in the broadest sense of the word. Like Che Guevara said, “the enemy must not be given an inch”. There are spaces that cannot be given freely, it's necessary to speak to people, to work with the lowest ranks, in the neighborhoods, to speak face to face. The media is important, social media are useful, but the space within the

community cannot be lost, there is where the right-wing and the United States have been working hard. Everyone who is strategically thinking of its future should go beyond the debate of public policies and include all the actors who influence in the creation of approval and the mobilization.
