# ESTADOS UNIDOS - AMERICA LATINA

# ¿Hay Estrategia en el Hemisferio después del 11-09?

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## I. Introduction

In many ways the war on terrorism and the war against Iraq make it appear as if we have gone back to the strategic framework of the Cold War. As it was then, there is a threat from outside the hemisphere. And, as before, the government of the United States is insisting that it monopolize the definition or identification of the enemy. The U.S. is demonstrating a disposition to act unilaterally, which the other nations in the region find disconcerting. Bilateral negotiations with the U.S. on matters of national interest to the countries in Latin America are subjected to a litmus test on the central issue of concern to the U.S., the war against terrorism. The archaic Rio Treaty (TIAR) was invoked immediately after September 11, 2001 and then left dangling, unused. A special ministerial conference to discuss the architecture of hemispheric defense, scheduled to be held in Mexico in May 2003, was postponed at the very last minute and rescheduled for October of the same year. This has not been an easy period for the nations in the hemisphere, many of which are going through periods of economic recession and/or political instability. The U.S. appears as distracted from hemispheric affairs as at any time in the Cold War.

Still, it is important to insist on taking careful note of the way in which the world has changed since the end of the Cold War. These changes create spaces within the international community for the nations of the hemisphere that did not exist earlier. Space, in this sense, is the freedom to act without suffering asymmetrical consequences. During the Cold War, the nations of the region had very little space in which to express their own foreign policy goals; the U.S. had imposed a zero-sum situation with reference to all issues considered by them to be critical to national security or regional security. Deviation from the line fixed by the U.S. was not acceptable. On all other issues outside of American interest, the nations had freedom of action; but that freedom was rendered of little use under the terms of the zero-sum restrictions of national security policy. After the end of the Cold War, this zero-sum game ended, and there were multiple solutions as well as multiple actors in defining the terms of the interchange or game and determining the value of the outcomes. Thus, space in this sense opens the way to autonomy. It does not by itself provide or create autonomy, but this can be achieved if one takes advantage of the space.

These new spaces define the insertion of the hemispheric nations into the international community and create a framework for the definition of their national interests

that is fundamentally new. It is vitally important for the nations of Latin America to understand the nature of the new space available to them and how they must learn to define and defend their national interests within them. The spaces are an opportunity, although they can carry risk. To seize the opportunity, it is necessary to understand the relationship between the local and the international definitions of security, and how each member of the international community can play a role in the protection of national as well as international security. It is also important to understand that at the global level, just as at the national or sub-regional levels, there are powerful potential linkages between or among issues that can be used to enhance the benefits of new space, but that might also raise the risks involved in global autonomy. There are two issues to be discussed in this chapter: the nature of security threats in the current situation; and the nature of power available to each nation in dealing with the threats.

## II. The Emergence of the New Security Threats

What is new about the new security threats is how easily and quickly they cross national boundaries, and how important, both in defining the threats as well as in framing responses to them, non-state actors have become. While it is important not to exaggerate these emerging characteristics—it would be wrong to claim, as some have, that the nation-state is dead—they have definitely altered the way in which threats occur. Several transnational threats, such as drug trafficking, have been around for years. Until the end of the Cold War, however, their significance was masked by the bipolar struggle between great powers, a struggle that emphasized the significance of states and state frontiers.

Subtracting the bipolar conflict from the equation, the new security agenda shows its true transnational colors. How are individual states to deal with the AIDS epidemic? How is a single state, no matter how powerful, to deal with money laundering or with the need to protect the environment? It is interesting to note that the U.S. has attempted to deal with two of the new security threats in a unilateral manner. With the first, the environment, it has refused to act. With the other, immigration, it has attempted to impose its will on other states, disregarding their own security concerns. In both cases, the U.S. has failed to achieve its goals.

The second salient characteristic of the new security threats that requires major adjustments by all members of the international community is that they are intermestic—they affect international security and domestic security at the same time. This means that the institutional response to the threat is ambiguous, and that it is not clear which party to the threat is more vulnerable. International crime is the best case in point, which, of course, includes illegal traffic in drugs. The intermestic quality of threats is a problem for all actors. It is particularly sensitive for nations in the hemisphere which have to deal with the U.S., who may perceive the threat as domestic while the U.S. considers the threat international. That is the prototypical case of asymmetrical response and its militarization.[1] The important

[1] Karl E. Meyer, "Asymmetry Is Not Destiny," *World Policy Journal* (Winter 2002), pp. 97-101.

thing for Latin Americans to understand in negotiations with the U.S. is that when their threat is primarily domestic, the appropriate response ought to be legal and civilian, not military.

What is peculiar to the new threats, in addition, is that they are linked to other issues or phenomena that may require a radically different response, and may affect different nations to widely differing degrees, which complicates the process of negotiating a response. For example, drug traffickers are closely linked to those who traffic in arms and to those who move money across national lines into different banking systems. Thus, the Cayman Islands are notorious for loose banking regulations that allow huge sums to pass through the islands' banks without control, facilitating the laundering of funds generated by selling drugs. The Cayman Islands is not directly affected by the traffic in drugs and may be unwilling to participate in programs that control that traffic. At the same time, they are reluctant to bring their banking laws into conformity with standards set by the U.S. and the European Union, because the flow of funds through the banks is extremely lucrative to the local economy.

No one suggests that the appropriate response to loose banking laws is sending in the Marines, yet cooperative enforcement of tighter banking rules might be a more effective response to the illegal traffic in drugs than increasing military aid to Colombia. The exchange of information also may prove more effective than traditional instruments of military force. The Amazon basin is a difficult area to control and requires cooperation among a number of nations. Effective monitoring of the area, perhaps by satellite or the new SIVAM radar system that Brazil has put into operation, would be much more important than sending in large numbers of troops. Information is the key, with its sharing done through legal systems, rather than through military institutions.

These characteristics of the new security threats combine to diminish the effectiveness of traditional modes of power, especially military and economic power—hard power—in preparing a response. The most frightening nuclear arsenal in the world cannot stop illegal drugs from entering the U.S., nor even slow the flow of illegal immigration across our boundaries. Similarly, as the war on terrorism has demonstrated clearly, military dominance by a single country is impossible and military power exercised by coalitions of allies can only deal effectively with specific targets, which may or may not diminish the threat to a nation's security. It is hard to argue that punishing Afghanistan and removing the Taliban from power has reduced the threat of terrorism. It is even harder to argue that bombing Iraq and removing Saddam Hussein from power will reduce the threat of terrorism. Reducing the threat of terrorism requires close cooperation among a large number of nations, including many nations that cannot be among those with large stocks of hard power.[2] The new security threats make even the most powerful vulnerable and lead the way for active protagonism by even the least powerful states and quite a few non-state actors.

## III. The Context in Which Threats are Addressed

[2] For a detailed discussion of terrorism and its impact on traditional responses, see Philip B. Heymann, "Dealing with Terrorism: An Overview," *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (Winter 2001/2002), pp. 24-38.

As important as the nature of the threats themselves in determining the appropriate response is the context in which national security policy is formulated. That too has changed radically since the Cold War ended. First and foremost, the role of multilateral organizations has grown and, while their record in the past decade has a blemish or two, they have demonstrated sufficient effectiveness to attract more attention and more commitments from members to bring disputes and dispute settlement into the framework of the organization. This is especially the case in the United Nations. Where previously struggles between the U.S. and either the Soviet Union or the People's Republic of China rendered the organization marginal, today both the U.S. and Russia are disposed to use the organization and allow it to act on behalf of the international community. The very fact that there is something called an international community enhances the standing of the UN and the rules by which it operates.[3]

The creation of an international community in trade has also been remarkable. The World Trade Organization is playing a growing role in rule making and dispute settlement among members. Even the U.S., the world's lone superpower, is forced to use the WTO and abide by its decisions. There are still major differences between the European Community and the U.S., but slowly there is movement toward convergence. The war on Iraq has increased the power of a wing of the Republican party that sees little value in international institutions; but it is unlikely that they will follow the strange logic of unilateralism and urge the U.S. to withdraw from the world. This means that the nations of the hemisphere can become actors in a variety of multilateral agencies that affect their destiny. Their trade strategies, as part of their strategic approach to world affairs, must become more complex, more layered, more sophisticated, and more protagonistic.

At the hemispheric level, the Organization of American States continues to be weighted down by half a century of abuse as an instrument of U.S. policy. Nevertheless, with Latin American leadership and important support from Canada, the OAS has become quite effective in dealing with carefully defined or delineated issues, such as drug trafficking. The OAS also has come to play an important role in the definition of rules in trade agreements and in legal issues. As the nations of the hemisphere have moved toward democracy, the OAS human rights commission has become a powerful instrument of hemispheric community and the values that hold the community together.[4]

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the transition to democracy in Latin America in creating space for the nations of the region in the international community. Not only are they now respected members of a community of values, but they can speak without embarrassment in international organizations. They have full rights to sit at the table and

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[3] The idea of an international society was promoted by the Martin Wight, Hedley Bull, and other founders of the English school. Within the English school, understandings of international society have differed. See Ian Hall, "Review article: still the English patient? Closures and inventions in the English school," *International Affairs* 77, no. 3 (2001): 931-942.

[4] On the increasing role of the OAS, see Luigi Einaudi in Joseph S. Tulchin, ed., *The Future of the Organization of American States and Hemispheric Security* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center). Francisco Rojas addressed arms agreements in "Confidence Building Measures and Strategic Balance: A Step Toward Expansion and Stability," his chapter in Joseph S. Tulchin and Francisco Rojas Aravena with Ralph H. Espach, eds., *Strategic Balance and Confidence Building Measures in the Americas* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).

become rule makers. They are now democratic nations and not considered pawns of the U.S., one of the two hegemonic powers struggling for power in the world of the Cold War. This serves to give more substance to declarations in favor of democratic government, or of human rights, and leads the community of democratic nations to be more energetic in the defense of the values that are important to all members of the community.

At the same time, the fact that national security policy is being formulated in a democratic context plays an important role in defining the response to national security threats. First, in most countries it is the legislatures that are responsible for appropriating the funds for the budgets of the armed forces, so that at least in theory the military must justify their expenditures. Second, for the first time in the history of most of the nations in the region, it is civilian leaders, in both the executive and legislative branches of government, who are responsible for fixing the missions of the armed forces, and there is very little civilian expertise available, either in the government or in civil society to help the process along. And, in the current environment of terrorism and organized crime, especially international drug and arms trafficking, those same civilian authorities are responsible for setting the relationships between the armed forces, which are traditionally trained to deal with external threats to national security, and the forces of law and order, which have traditionally been responsible for internal security. It is crucial that the civilian authorities who deal with both sides decide how to divide security responsibilities among the various institutions. Now, more than ever, it is inconceivable to allow the armed forces to define their own mission and to set themselves apart from and above the constitution and the elected government. However, it is politically difficult for the democratically elected government to avoid dealing with citizen insecurity by taking a hard line against crime—and that means calling on the armed forces to restore law and order in moments of crisis.

The combination of these two changes can be observed in the role of peacekeeping missions. Today it is in the interests of all democratic nations in the region to participate in such activities. And the more a nation participates, the more it strengthens its position as a protagonist in the international community.

A beneficial product of the transition to democracy has been the reversal in most sub-regions of the hemisphere of the historic hypotheses of conflict among states, especially the ABC countries and their equivalent in the bilateral relationship between Mexico and the U.S.[5] These historic steps have led to significant progress in mutual confidence building at the sub-regional level. While less dramatic, there has been progress as well in the field of integration, most pronounced in Mercosur, involving Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, with Chile as an associate member. The Andean countries are lagging, but even among them there has been some forward movement in their efforts to reconcile national policies with sub-regional goals. It is in the Andean region that some of the most difficult historic animosities remain. There is work to be done in the future.[6]

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[5] See Tulchin and Espach, eds., *Latin America in the New International System* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2001).

[6] See Araníbar Quiroga, Antonio. Working paper #240. "Bolivia, Chile, y Perú de la divergencia a la cooperación." Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center. Michelle Bachelet, Minister of National Defense for Chile, also spoke on this topic on Oct. 14, 2002, at FLACSO, Chile. On Mercosur, see

This means that hemispheric affairs have been transformed into debates among legitimate democratic regimes. This increases the importance of shared values in the discussions of security threats and, as a consequence, enhances the importance of members of the community other than the U.S. Preserving democracy has become a central goal of the hemispheric system, and in pursuing that goal each democratic state has as much right to participate as the U.S. In the discussion of all issues dealing with shared values—the rule of law, the struggle to reduce corruption, human rights, the struggle against organized crime—it is sharing the values that allows participation, not a given level of economic or military power.[7] This does not mean that the U.S. is less powerful. It means that the other nations of the region have new opportunities to act and join in the community as rule makers. Furthermore, as has been argued persuasively for nearly a decade, none of these issues can be dealt with effectively in a unilateral manner, so the level or amount of an individual nation's power is less relevant than in dealing with traditional security threats.

The opportunities for protagonism—whether in trade policy, protecting human rights, dealing with drug trafficking or money laundering, or in deciding what the trade-offs should be between global and regional commitments—create space for Latin American nations, space that translates into increased autonomy. In this sense, power in the post-Cold War world has ceased to be zero-sum or mercantile and become an expanding attribute, or a Keynesian concept.[8] From the perspective of Washington, the hegemonic power gets what it wants less through the exercise of hard power than through collaboration and cooperation with the other nations of the region. That is true in all cases except the extreme example in which the U.S. decides to attack another country militarily, as it did Iraq.

## IV. Identifying Sources of Power Available to Members of the International Community

Before exploring the new spaces created by the changes and offering some suggestions for the countries in the region, it is necessary to mention two important areas in which the absence of change is noteworthy. First is the propensity of the U.S. government to act unilaterally and to assume subordination and collaboration by the other governments in the hemisphere. Second, despite the dramatic, historic shift in hypotheses of conflict among the ABC countries, there is a repeated pattern of response to the U.S., in which the nations of the region find it difficult to act together to defend their common interests in the face of U.S. demands.

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Tulchin and Espach, eds., *Paths to Regional Integration. The Case of Mercosur* Woodrow Wilson Center Reports on the Americas #5 (Washington, DC: Wilson Center, 2002).

[7] Values have long played a role in Latin American regional relations. Arie Kacowicz chronicles their effect in *The Impact of Norms in the International Society: The Latin American Experience, 1881-2001*, a forthcoming book.

[8] The debate over power in the new international community is dealt with by John M. Owen IV, "Transnational Liberalism and U.S. Primacy," *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (Winter 2001/2002), pp. 117-152.

Not long ago, a major Argentine student of international affairs, Juan Gabriel Tokatlián, suggested that the U.S. was a threat to the national interests of Latin American nations. He was referring to the way in which the U.S. was militarizing its response to all security threats, even those manifested as domestic challenges to law and order, and argued that militarizing the response to terrorism would undermine democracies in the region.[9]

I would add two other ways in which the U.S. is a threat to the national interests of the nations in the region. The first is the U.S. tendency, common during the Cold War, to side frequently with authoritarian regimes against democratic forces, if the latter were considered "soft on communism" or subject to subversion. On several occasions this led the U.S. to sacrifice democratic forces to authoritarian groups that promised to be more sympathetic to U.S. interests if they were to obtain power. It is fortunate, therefore, that all the nations of the region, save one, are civilian and democratic, because the current Bush administration has shown itself disposed to the same sort of dichotomous definitions of good and evil, friend and foe, as was common during the Cold War, suggesting that they are less concerned with democracy and human rights than they are with specific strategic objectives, some of which, such as the war in Iraq, may have little to do with Latin America.

The second way in which the U.S. obsession with terrorism hurts the interests of nations in the hemisphere is that it has become single-minded in its focus, and inattentive to issues of greater concern to Latin America. In the Bush administration's national defense policy statement, published at the end of 2002, Latin America is reduced from a set of neighbors and allies to a set of instruments for the protection of U.S. interests. This, too, is a throw-back to the days of the Cold War.

What, then, are the nations of the region to do about this dilemma? The answer, I believe, consists of two parts. One part is to understand the major changes in the international system and locate those issues or those values on which they can express themselves as rule makers, and not be content to be rule takers.[10] The second is to use the transnational nature of the terrorist threat, assume a protagonist posture in response, and insist on operating through multilateral agencies or multilateral collaboration in the response. Both of these require cooperation among the Latin American nations, and that means deeply imbedded patterns of behavior must shift. Can the Latin American nations put aside their historic strategic isolation from one another in order to influence the U.S. and more effectively protect their own interests? To begin, I will identify areas of possible action, areas of new spaces available for the exercise of soft power.[11]

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[9] Tokatlián, in Tulchin and Taraciuk, *Politicas de Defensa en America Latina*, (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2003). This same notion was explored in Vinod Aggarwal, Ralph E. Espach, and Joseph S. Tulchin, eds., *Regional and Transregional Trade Strategies in Latin America*. (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, forthcoming in 2003).

[10] The distinction between rule makers and rule takers in Latin America is spelled out in my essay in Tulchin and Espach, *Latin America in the New International System*, *op. cit*.

[11] The most extensive discussion of the concept of soft power is in Joseph Nye, "Soft Power," *Foreign Policy*, no. 80 (Fall 1990), pp. 153-71.

The emergence of non-state actors is probably one of the most significant shifts in the international system since the end of the Cold War. The limits to the effectiveness of these NGOs as international actors are clear in a war situation such as the U.S. attack on Iraq, but there are many cases in which their influence has been demonstrated, particularly in the post-war situations in Central Asia and Africa. While the exercise of U.S. military power may be impressive, it cannot be invoked to solve all international disputes nor used in every case in which the U.S. government feels that it is being thwarted. This suggests that NGOs will continue to be major players in setting rules in matters of shared values.[12] Again, this will be particularly true in the Western Hemisphere so long as the majority of countries remain civilian and democratic.

This situation puts added pressure on existing multilateral agencies and on the framework of democracy, the rule of law. The rule of law is the core rule and, as with other shared values, participating as a rule maker is not a function of traditional power, so that the nations of the region can join in to the extent that they, themselves, are willing to abide by the rules they set.

The role of multilateral agencies is not so unambiguous. The war in Iraq makes plains the limitations on the UN. It is not clear what the role of the OAS might be in a similar situation. And if the U.S. cannot be constrained by the UN, it is even less likely that it will be constrained by the OAS. Nevertheless, there are many issues on which the OAS can remain relevant: all the issues of the non-traditional security agenda. However, in order for the OAS to remain relevant, the members must agree on a line of action, and that has not been easy in the past. Given the argument presented here, it is clear that the member states should avoid issues related to the use of military force and focus their collective energies on matters that are not direct threats to the security of the U.S.

In addition to the core issues of shared values, trade strategy offers the nations of the hemisphere the greatest opportunity for exercising relative autonomy. As I have argued elsewhere, trade strategy can be a form of soft power.[13] Put simply, the U.S. needs trading partners; each partner has some leverage over the other.[14] The geopolitical question is to determine the risks and benefits for any country at any particular point in time in linking trade issues to other issues of national security. The lengths to which the Bush administration appeared willing to go to force Chile and Mexico to vote in their favor on the Security Council of the UN proved ill founded, and the reluctance of both countries to capitulate ended up strengthening their hand. Whether or not their reluctance to vote for war in Iraq will create problems for them, such as with the U.S. Congress, remains to be seen.

These are some of the issue areas that create space for cooperation and effective exercise of (semi) autonomous action by the nations of Latin America. Where can they

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[12] Richard Falk and Andrew Strauss address the growing influence of NGOs in "Toward Global Parliament," *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 1 (January/February 2001): 212-220.

[13] See Tulchin, in Aggarwal, Espach and Tulchin, eds., *Regional and Transregional Trade Strategies in Latin America*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, forthcoming in 2003.

[14] On trade strategies and soft power in the hemisphere, see Aggarwal, Espach, and Tulchin, eds., *Regional and Transregional Trade Strategies in Latin America.* Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, forthcoming in 2003.

begin? The best way, given the historic patterns of subordination, timidity, and local jealousy, is to begin small, with the least sensitive issues. One easy starting point is to attack money laundering. Another is to take the Chilean initiative on military transparency and extend it to the rest of the region. More important is to confront the U.S. together on the issues that pose the greatest threat to the region, such as counter-narcotics. Can we finally agree that we must all deal with the illegal traffic in drugs and the effect such traffic has on all the nations in the hemisphere? Colombia must not be left alone to deal with the narco-traffickers and the U.S. That can only further militarize the campaign against drugs and serve to push the geographic focus of the problem from Colombia to some other country in the region.

Whether we adopt an idealist approach to international affairs, sometimes referred to as an institutional approach, or a realist approach, the only effective mode of action by the nations of Latin America in their dealing with the U.S. is to act together.[15] In other words, no matter what the issue—human rights, trade, arms proliferation—the only way to protect a single nation's national interest and enhance its security is by working together with other nations in the region. If you insist on a zero-sum calculation of international interactions, such collaboration appears counter-intuitive.[16] But if you accept the proposition that all power is a plus-plus game, the only way to maximize the security of any one nation is to collaborate with others in the region. Moreover, spurning collaboration by choosing bilateral dealings with the U.S. is a lose-lose game; each nation presents itself to the U.S. in its weakest possible position and, at the same time, undermines whatever mutual confidence has been built with neighbors in the region.

The nations of Latin America have as much at stake in the war on terrorism as the U.S. Democracy and human values are threatened. The threat is much more serious in countries where democracy is still vulnerable and fragile, where democratic institutions are still being consolidated. The U.S. is powerful and arrogant enough in the use of its power to take its own democratic values for granted. That is a luxury and an arrogance that the other nations in the hemisphere must not afford.

The response to international terrorism must take into account the needs and interests of countries other than the U.S., and that includes protecting the values of the nations in the hemisphere. This is the new space available to the nations of Latin America: the convergence of democratic and human values with the more traditional measures of national power. If the hyper-realists insist that the only power is military power, they misread the current moment. The U.S. has enough power to bomb Iraq as long as it likes. It may well destroy Saddam Hussein and drive him from power; it might even succeed in sending a

[15] For an explanation of the realist perspective on international relations, see Richard Rosecrance, "Has Realism Become Cost-Benefit Analysis?: A Review Essay," International Security, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Fall 2001), pp. 132-154. For more details on liberalism, see John M. Owen, IV, "Transnational Liberalism and U.S. Primacy," *International Security*, vol. 26, no. 3 (Winter 2001/2002), pp. 117-152.

[16] Game theory is the core of rational choice analysis of policy formulation. For a discussion of its relevance to international relations, see Barbara Koremenos, Charles Lipson and Duncan Snidal, "The Rational Design of International Institutions," *International Organization*, Vol. 55, No. 4 (Autumn 2001), pp. 761-799.

military force into Iraq to destroy what weapons of mass destruction exist there. But will it also invade and occupy the dozen or more places where terrorists plan their activities, including the Triple Frontier?

The hardest liners of the hard liners in the Bush administration understand that achieving the nation's security objectives requires the use of soft power and the active, protagonist collaboration of allies. To combat terrorism—and to achieve economic integration or political stability—all the nations of the hemisphere must play a role. Yet to become relevant in dealing with the new threats to security, and to make their voices heard, the nations of the hemisphere must find ways to speak in unison.

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