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ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

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The implications of the international strategic order of the conflict between China and Taiwan

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WWW.3SECURITYCOL.COM | N°08 | OCTOBER 2022



The implications of the international strategic order of the conflict between China and Taiwan

Nancy Pelosi's recent visit to the island of Taiwan represented a great shock to the world, since the legitimacy of the island as an independent state is under permanent discussion given its particular sedimentation parallel to the opinion of the People's Republic of China, the direct diplomatic recognition by part of the United States of America represents, symbolically, an offense against the historical delegitimization that China has established as a narrative in favor of the total recognition of its sovereignty over the entire constitution of its original territory.

Beyond raging in the complex debate of who is responsible for the political-administrative exercise of Taiwan, it happens that the relevance of the island for the world goes much further than a historical territorial dispute, since both the interests and the repercussions of this conflict, that, in a hypothetical of uncertain estimates, could intensify even more, end up compromising the global security alignment.

Attributed as a lightning trip due to the suddenness with which it occurred, Pelosi's visit to the island of Taiwan took place contrary to all the warnings that were made in favor of her own protection. Appealing to the law on relations with Taiwan issued 46 years ago by the United States Congress, Pelosi argued that her intention to travel to Taiwan was under all constitutional acquiescence insofar as the national recognition of a single China did not condition (in any way) the impossibility of establishing diplomatic dealings with the province (*La tercera, 2022*).

Although it is suggested that this action had as its real purpose the enhancement of Pelosi's political campaign to ensure her political survival in the next congressional elections, it is also true that such disruption does not seem to go against the interests of the United States insofar as it facilitates revive tensions with China that prevent any possible intervention in Taiwan (*Real Instituto Elcano, 2022*).

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Eln fact, despite the fact that the United States has supported the insertion of the People's Republic of China in the UN as the only China in exchange for the position that was monopolized by the Taiwanese occupation of the old regime of the nation (who erected under the name of the Republic of China) in 1971 (CNN en Español, 2021), the truth is that that alliance had been consummated within the framework of the cold war in order to strengthen powerful allies in the East (BBC News, 2022). The great American Nation, not in vain, maintained a strategic ambiguity with the partial recognition (not directly specified but evident in its modus operandi) of Taiwan as an independent and sovereign territory (BBC News, 2022). With this "back door open", US protection of the island has supported its arms positioning under a questionable but sufficient legitimacy for the international discursive framework.

Economic interdependence has always been the great argument for students of international politics in favor of considering a traditional war absurd in these times, however, it is true, in contrast, that the Case of Russia and Ukraine has opened the possibility that a similar situation could occur between China and Taiwan (La tercera, 2022). The strategic value of the island of Taiwan is key in a possible conflict scenario because it implies, as can be seen in Figure 1, both the uncomfortable proximity to the Communist Republic in the event of a US prevalence, and the dangerous vulnerability of the military bases in Guam and Hawaii (key points of the American presence in the East) in case of a Chinese occupation (BBC News, 2022).

Figure 1: US and Chinese naval bases in the Pacific



Note. Taking from Bases navales de EE:UU y China en el Pacífico, Fundación de Ciencias y Política, 2019, (https://www.dw.com). CC BY 2.0



Taking into account the above, with both China and the United States being the pillars of capitalism, the economic system that supports practically all the political systems in the world (democracies, autocracies, totalitarianism, sultanism, etc.), any large-scale conflict between these two nations It supposes the possible global destabilization of all contemporary nations, which implies, of course, the compromise of their security.

On the other hand, it is also important to keep something in mind: beyond relegating Taiwan as a territorial location where the symbolism of the historic East-West confrontation ends, this small island has, on its own, immense value. Being the producer of 65% of the chips in the world, technological derivatives of all kinds including household appliances, computers and military weapons depend heavily on Taiwanese manufacturing and export (*BBC News, 2022*). Coined the term "Silicon Shield" by Craig Addison given the protection that the high presence of this metal provides to the island territory (2001), it has been argued that domination over this indispensable economic resource limits China's military actions in pretense of a direct conquest.

Leaving aside the discussion of how long this advantage represents a guarantee of protection, the truth is that Taiwan's dominance (direct or indirect) can alter international security as the flow of smart weapons (in fact, the most relevant to the establishment of security guidelines between states, as they are linked to the development of weapons of mass destruction) could be biased towards the specific interests of one side.

Previously, the case of Ukraine has been given as an example that economic interdependence may not always be a preventive rule, however, the truth is that both the level of economic roots between China and Taiwan, as well as the relevance of the treated resource for the world (chips), become greater than in the case of the war initiated by the Putin regime (DW, 2022). The tensions in the Strait of Formosa may not unleash a traditional war on a global scale, however, it is important not to forget that they have the potential to increase the investment in arms of both nations and, as a result, generate drastic changes in the security policies of the nations directly involved, as well as those adjacent to the conflict zone.

Figure 2: Military expenditure of the two main powers in the Pacific area.



Note. Taking from GASTO MILITAR EN LA ZONA DEL PACÍFICO, SIPRI, 2022, (https://www.dw.com). CC BY 2.0.



REGIONAL

The erosion of democracy in Latin America and its effects in security for civil society

In our political modernity, erroneous attributions to political models based on popular cases of success or failure under an ideological link have been generalized. For the same reason, it is quite common to be able to identify reductionist smears in everyday conversation of leftist movements under the nominations "communist" "socialist" or "Castrochavista" and rightwing movements under the relegations of "Nazis" "Colonialists" or " imperialists" as causes of poor government performance, which fail to understand the complexity of the political spectrum that each wing implies. Part of these attributions have permeated, of course, the perception of democracy in Latin America, which has come to be classified as inefficient due to its lack of harshness, or on the contrary, hegemonic due to the relegation that has seemed to result on certain occasions.

Whatever the case, the truth is that the popular misunderstanding of the electorate regarding the importance of democracy and the preservation of its maxims, has been the default tool with which different political actors of all kinds have managed to erode the system under narratives ambiguous or inaccurate that have managed to carry great weight in the opinion of civil society. Contrary to the true interests of the people, the erosion of democracy supposes an institutional breakdown that, among so many spheres of daily life that it compromises, supposes the dismantling of the guarantees of protection and security that by right should be preserved.

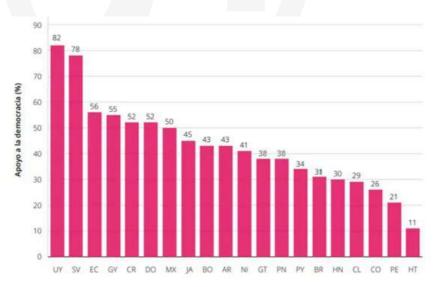
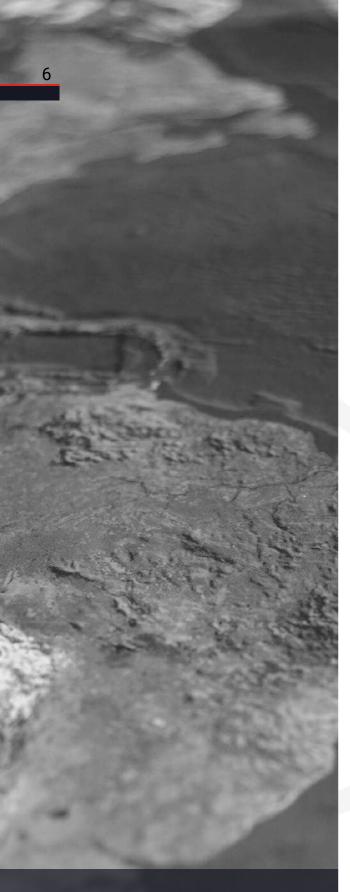


Figure 3 Satisfaction with democracy in 20 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean

Note. The abbreviations of the names in the countries shown in the graph are, respectively: Uruguay, El Salvador, Ecuador, Guyana, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Jamaica, Bolivia, Argentina, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, Brazil, Honduras, Colombia, Peru, Haiti, Taking from satisfacción con la democracia, Barómetro de las américas, 2021, (www.dialogopolitico.org). CC BY 2.0.



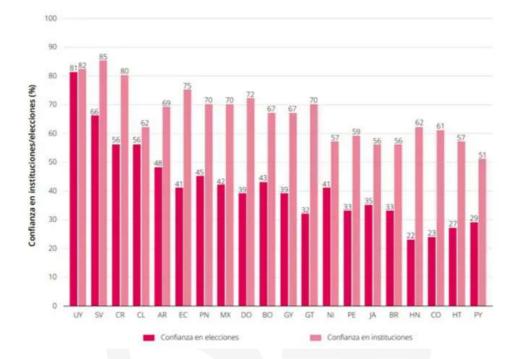
The erosion of democracy supposes an institutional breakdown that, among so many spheres of daily life that it compromises, supposes the dismantling of the guarantees of protection and security that by right should be preserved. According to the surveys carried out by the Barometro de las Americas for the past 2021, the assessment of democracy as the best political system, despite continuing to be predominant in all citizens with 61% favorability, has presented, compared to the distant year 2004, a considerable decrease to the point of being worrying (*Diálogo Político , 2022*). On the other hand, of the 20 countries evaluated in this measurement, it was reported that, in 13 of these, more than half of the respondents were reluctant to find democracy satisfactory. (*Casa America; LAPOP, 2021*).

A great reason why the lack of understanding with democracy is becoming more and more evident is that, for practical purposes for the citizens that make up the Latin American region, the system seems to promise more than it can deliver. (*Real Instituto Elcano , 2021*). When the perception of a state of security crisis in which robbery, murder and violence prevail as a constant (*Publimetro, 2022*), a dissonance is generated between the liberal principles that should be guarantors of the preservation of the due conditions of life with what one has. For the same reason, the direct attribution that can be made more easily to find guilt (apart from the stigmatization of groups) becomes the generality of the system.

The variables that define the erosion of democracy go beyond mere perception. Part of the preservation of the system rests on the reliability of the elections, as well as trust in the institutions, which are vital for the exercise and assurance of democratic representativeness. As can be seen in figure 4, despite the fact that trust in institutions has remained at fairly decent levels, on the other hand, reliability about elections is unsatisfactorily low, which, combined with a general reduction of those surveyed towards the rejection against imposing forms of government such as coup d'etat (Diálogo Político, 2022), it denotes the implicit favorability (although for now, to a low degree) towards exceptional seizures of power that may have a more autocratic cut. The rejection of democracy supposes, given the limited availability of political alternatives, the acceptance of regimes that have the facility to disable civil society from being able to defend itself from any abuse committed against it. (Civiles Derechos Humanos, 2017).



Figure 4. Trust in elections and institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean



Note. Taking from confianza en las instituciones y en las elecciones, 2021, (www.dialogopolitico.org). CC BY 2.0

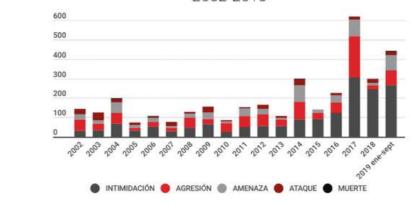
As an example of these limitations evidenced for a specific case in the region, we can mention the violence committed against journalists and media in the Venezuelan regime (non-democratic) as evidenced in Figure 5, which reflects part of the high censorship that you live under an authoritarian guideline.

As ironic as it may sound, the fact that in Latin American democracies factors such as corruption, crime, and insecurity can judge the reliability of the system, means, in the long term, that the system is weakened (*Political Database of the Americas*, 2007) and for the same reason, corruption, crime and insecurity end up increasing. Varied are the non-democratic systems in the world, from North Korea to Cuba, going through China and, of course, Venezuela; What is constant in all these cases is that the systematic violation of human rights is abundant and has a large part of its incidence directly from the state directive (and although it is believed that way, this phenomenon is not directly linked to what assumes favorability to the left) (*Infobae*, 2022).



Figure 5. Evolution of violence against journalists and media in Venezuela 2002-2009

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Evolución de la violencia contra periodistas y medios 2002-2019

Democracy is far from being a perfect political model, because although it presupposes intimate respect for the individual and group rights of its citizens, the truth is that the existence of cases such as Colombia or Mexico, where the violation of human rights does not seems to cease, denote the fallacy existing within an idealistic system of aspirations (*Mundo ITAM , 2021*). However, it is also necessary to clarify that given the regulations under which democracies are established, it is more likely that they will end up being able to evolve with due media, civil and institutional monitoring, than that regimes without international regulation agree to submit to any type of accounts for their actions.

Part of the reason why the maintenance of democracy is also a priority for the preservation of the security of civil society throughout the region lies in the fact that structural problems like migratory crises (derived from the terrible living conditions) coming from non-democratic regimes such as Venezuela or Nicaragua, have cross-border incidents that can, apart from causing labor, fiscal, and supply tensions (*Dirigentes digital, 2019*), sharpen the perception of criminality, which facilitates the acceptance of radically segregative political positions that seek to alter institutional norms (the guarantors of citizen welfare) to end the restrictions that, according to narratives of the style, complicate the resolution of the problem.

Note. Interestingly, in the evolution graph, an increase in violence can be seen to the extent that the Venezuelan democratic institutionality was broken with adjudications of presidential over-empowerment, taking from Violencia contra periodistas se impone sin castigo en Venezuela, 2019, (https://espaciopublico.ong/) CC BY 2.0

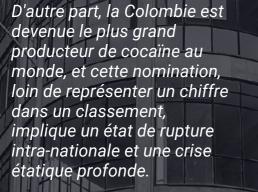


Colombian national reconfiguration of the war on drugs, as an intensifying factor of the crisis

The war on drugs has been constituted, in the face of the national and international framework, as the great Colombian strategy to face the problem of the cultivation and shipment of psychoactive drugs that has been sustained under the shelter of strong criminal structures outside the law. Coming (as we know it) from the Pastrana period as part of a political alignment with the US leadership in the fight against terrorism, this narrative prevailed during most of the 21st century due to its continuity adopted in the presidential periods of Álvaro Uribe and Iván Duque (Rosen & Martínez, 2016).

In contrast, the position of the current current executive has drawn attention for changing the approach. Gustavo Petro, last September, declared before the UN (as he did during his inauguration speech) that he would reject the continuity of a narrative of persecution against drugs to focus on a more social structure that can be really effective for solve the problem (2022). This perspective, similar to the one assumed by Santos in his mandate, has been positively valued by political experts who have argued that it is essential to generate a change with greater impact, in contrast to the disappointing results obtained from the War on Drugs. (El Espectador, 2022), however, going beyond the approach, the truth is that the statements of the current president are disturbing as soon as one thinks about how to guarantee national security when so many points are left unattached.

First of all, the reconfiguration against the drug problem, apart from the speeches presented for access to popular evaluation, has not had any kind of clarifying formalization on paper. For the same reason, basing ourselves mainly on his words during his address to the UN, it is understood that far from seeing the problem as a local responsibility



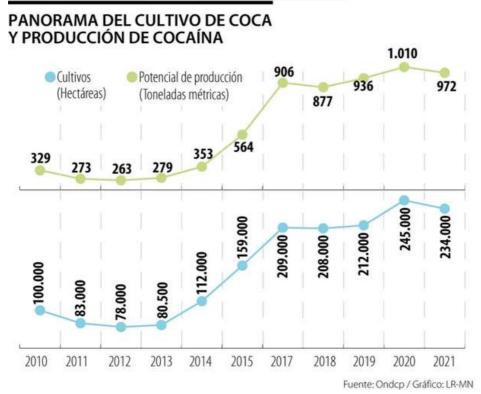




for the inefficiency in coping with it, it delegates its causality to the perverse systematization of capitalism, sustained as a form of domination of the Global North over the countries of the South *(CNN en español, 2022)*.

In this same sense, a victimizing narrative is generated that assigns the need for reparation to the "perpetrating" States, instead of, as had been proposed during the Santos period, encouraging international cooperation by disseminating the blame between the Colombian State itself and all the countries interconnected with the problem (*Zambrano et al., s,f.*). This type of recriminations, against the way of facilitating some process, can generate a dilemma between nations that ends up making a strategy of social reconstruction unfeasible, especially when the coverage of the problem requires, due to the extensive networks of trafficking that are handled around the entire region, of a transnational resolution (*La Silla Vacía, 2022*).

Figure 6. Increase in coca cultivation over the last 11 years

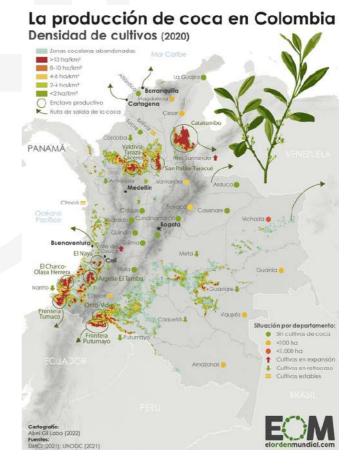


Note. Taking from Panorama de cultivo de coca y producción de cocaína, 2022, (www.larepublica.co). CC BY 2.0



On the other hand, Colombia has become the largest producer of Cocaine in the world, and this nomination, far from representing just a number in a ranking, implies a state of intra-national rupture and a deep state crisis, where armed actors under administrations parallels operate in peripheral territories (Dejusticia, 2018). As can be seen in Figure 6, the presence of plantations in Colombia has been increasing progressively in the last decade, except for the past 2021 where there was a slight reduction of 4.5% (According to this report, since the UNODC recently gave know new historical records in the cultivation of this plant) (UNODC, 2022), (La República, 2022).

Figure 7. Areas with the highest number of hectares of coca per square kilometer in 2021



Note. Taking from La producción de coca en Colombia, 2022, (elordenmundial.com) CC BY 2.0.



With these critical values on inadequate holdings. of land, in the midst of the unequal panorama of its distribution, the urgency of being able to respond quickly and effectively is far from being expendable when the security of multiple vulnerable populations in the country, such as those in Norte de Santander (Catatumbo), Antioquia (northern zone), Nariño (Tumaco and El Charco border) and Putumayo (on its border with Ecuador), is hanging by a thread (*El Orden Mundial, 2022*).

Considering the data obtained in the recent report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which works with local authorities for the effective collection of drug-related information, it has been found that 62% of coca crops are concentrated in Nariño, Norte de Santander and Putumayo (2022). On the other hand, it was also found that, of the more than 1,000 municipalities that Colombia has, 182 are affected by coca, and only 12 concentrate half of all their crops. *(UNODC, 2022)*.

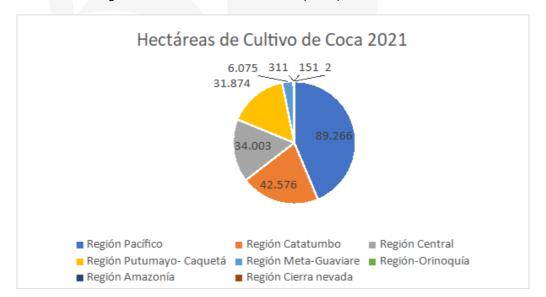
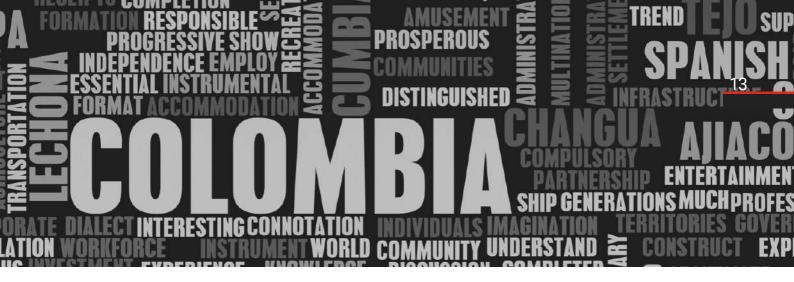


Figure 8. Areas with the highest number of hectares of coca per square kilometer in 2021

Note. The three indicated values that do not reach visible representation (311, 151, 2), correspond to the Orinoquía Region, the Amazon Region and the Cierra Nevada Region, respectively. Adapted from Resumen de resultados censo2021 de cultivos de coca en Colombia, 2022, (www.unodc.org). CC BY 2.0



Although it can be affirmed that Petro's proposal is of great value for the stable consolidation of a drug-free nation, the truth is that the non-existent margin of alternative options with which the president seems to operate, suggests that if his plan there would be no consistent options to deal with the problem (*La Silla Vacía, 2022*), which, of course, would end up being reflected in the increase in the perpetration of human rights evidenced in variables such as a possible increase in massacres, homicides, cases of extortion and cases of terrorism.

Petro supported his presidential candidacy in his convincing rhetoric. Understanding that much of his popularity is based on his discursive capacity, the prevalence of a State of opinion in his mandate (Gamba & Roldán, 2013) could subordinate the political inflexibility that is required to face complex situations. An example of this is the recent case of land occupation in Cauca by indigenous communities that had been promised an adjudication of land by right. *(El Tiempo, 2022)*.

Established a conflict between the new owners of the land, and the communities demanding respect for the agreements, the government's response capacity has lacked initiative, leaving the prolongation of the conflict to the fate of those confronted instead of taking preventive measures of greater hardness. With the progressive strengthening of armed groups that base their economic subsistence on the production of cocaine (*International Crisis Group, 2017*), the passivity of a reactive response for its control in the excessive abstention from the use of force facilitates the detriment of security national insofar as it allows criminal roots in new territories.

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