

## Overview:

Since World War Two, the United States has been substantially engaged in global affairs, engaging diplomatically with countries all over the world. Over time, as the complexity of global issues has risen, and other nations have begun to more effectively compete with the United States for influence, it has gotten harder and harder for the U.S. to give its full attention to every single area of the world. Thus, they've had to prioritize, or focus their attention in certain areas.

In Spring 2025, President Trump appointed businessman Elon Musk to run the Department of Government Efficiency. Formerly the U.S. Digital Service, this newly re-named government agency was tasked with "improving efficiency" and reducing "waste" in the government. Practically, the agency has taken a sledgehammer to the federal government, dramatically firing tens of thousands of workers with little analysis as to their roles and usefulness. One of the areas most affected has been foreign policy, where the United States Agency for International Development has been completely dismantled, which was the main body responsible for international aid and development for the U.S. government. The State Department, where the country's diplomats work, is experiencing further cuts, eliminating its Africa Bureau and reducing its presence in many countries worldwide. Beyond the direct firings, the disruption has led many experts to leave the government for jobs elsewhere, reducing the experience and expertise available for the president to execute his agenda. The Defense Department's new leader, Pete Hegseth, (previously responsible for a non-profit of 25 employees) has never run a large organization before, compounding the inability of the government to multi-task.

In an era of reduced government capacity, the President must pick and choose where to spend his limited resources. President Trump has made his focus clear early in his first term -- Latin America. From trade and near-shoring to immigration, cartels and drug policy, the nation is definitely focused southwards.

## Strategy:

This is an “off case” argument, a generic negative strategy that applies to every (or most) affirmative cases on the topic. It says that the government is focusing on important issues in Latin America now, but that the plan will distract the government from achieving those goals by making a major policy initiative in the Arctic (the other side of the world, almost literally).

### **Uniqueness Debate:**

The negative team needs to win that we’re focusing on Latin America now, and numerous examples are provided in the file.

The affirmative team can argue either that the U.S. is already focusing northwards, and not southwards on Latin America, or they can argue that the U.S. will inevitably focus northwards as climate change makes new opportunities available.

### **Link Debate:**

The U.S. does lots of things all over the world all the time, so the negative team will need to win that the affirmative is substantial, and / or could be the first of a fundamental shift in our priorities northwards. They will also need to win that the U.S. has limited capacity, and can’t do everything.

The affirmative team should make arguments that the U.S. is a super-power, and can do multiple things at the same time, and has the capacity to effectively focus in multiple places. They should also win that the affirmative is small and not a realignment of policy priorities.

### **Impact Debate:**

There are two sections of impacts that the negative team can choose from:

- A) China -- The United States is competing with China for a “Sphere of Influence,” or a region where they are the dominant power. Letting China be the dominant power in a region close to the United States is definitely not in our best interests, and has a range of impacts.
- B) Other things -- There are also plenty of non-China related reasons why the United States should focus on Latin America instead of the Arctic.

The affirmative team will need to make sure that their impact answers respond to the specific scenario the negative team chooses to use. They should make arguments that the impacts of the affirmative are more important (Timeframe, Magnitude, Probability), and they should also make arguments like focusing on the Arctic will be good -- such as challenging China in the Arctic is better than challenging them in Latin America.

### **Topicality:**

Topicality is an argument that questions if the affirmative team is “on topic,” or if they fall underneath the resolution. It can also be used to get the affirmative team to admit things that you can use to make unrelated arguments.

There is a topicality file in this section -- it defines the word "significantly." In order to be topical, the affirmative team needs to show that their affirmative plan is significant, aka large, big, and important. The negative should use these arguments to their advantage to prove that the affirmative team is making a "significant" policy shift from Latin America to the Arctic. This creates a "double bind," or a lose-lose situation for the affirmative team. The aff can either be topical, and give the negative team a link to their Focus Disadvantage, or they can avoid the link to the Focus disadvantage, but lose the debate on topicality.

## Negative Evidence

Worksheet: Sample 1st Negative Speech:

**Uniqueness Debate:** (Choose one piece of evidence to help tell your story from the Uniqueness section)

**Link Debate:**

(Choose one piece of evidence to help tell your story from the Link section)

**Impact Debate:**

(Choose one piece of evidence to help tell your story from the Impact section)

## Uniqueness Debate:

**China is expanding their footprint in Latin America now-- trade, diplomatic muscle, etc. and is actively resisting the U.S. there.**

### **Wirtschaftler 2024**

Valerie, Fellow, Foreign Policy and Emerging Technology Initiatives, Brookings A new cold war i bound to backfire in Latin America, 9/25, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-are-the-united-states-and-china-intersecting-in-latin-america/>

**For the past two decades, China's interests in Latin America have grown exponentially.**

Beijing's objectives are threefold: economic, diplomatic, and geopolitical. With aspirations toward greater economic engagement,

**China's trade with Latin America**—including imports of raw materials and food supplies and exports of manufactured goods—**has grown** from around \$18 billion in 2002 **to over \$450 billion in 2022**. In tandem, **China has**

**sought to leverage this growing economic muscle to reshuffle regional alignments and isolate Taiwan.** And in some countries, **Beijing has engaged in more provocative attempts to**

**counterbalance the United States'** presence in the Indo-Pacific. A recent [report](#) by scholars at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, for example, has found evidence of suspected Chinese spy facilities in Cuba, designed to glean signals intelligence about U.S. activities. More broadly, a Chinese security [presence](#) in parts of the region rattles Washington's foreign policy apparatus. The United States, by contrast, has for centuries maintained a vested interest in regional dynamics, at times for [better](#) and at times for [worse](#). Due to geographic proximity, regional instability often [ricochets](#) to the United States through the southern border with Mexico. As a result, U.S. engagement often focuses more on immediate efforts to promote stability and curb migration flows, such as border security and assistance to reduce violence. These near-term challenges do not factor into China's regional calculus, but they do limit the U.S. government's ability to focus on longer-term objectives in Latin America, like expanding trade or environmental considerations. Recently, however, **U.S. policymakers have also endeavored**

**to counter China's expansion, with a focus on deepening economic ties.** While China's regional engagement—like spy facilities—is sometimes inflammatory, there may be areas where Beijing's regional interests have benefited U.S. strategic objectives. There is some [evidence](#), for example, that China's investments in energy, infrastructure, and broader trade dynamics helped to create 1.8 million jobs in Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, and Chile between 1995 and 2016. However, the distribution of these jobs and their overall quality varies significantly by sector and country. Yet **Beijing's approach can also undermine some U.S. objectives** as well. **In the recent Venezuelan elections, for example, Chinese President Xi Jinping was one of the first leaders to congratulate Nicolas Maduro on an election victory that is widely considered to be fraudulent. This type of signal from Beijing offers important backing to a repressive, unpopular regime and hinders U.S.**

**goals of ensuring regional stability.** More broadly, China's general disinterest in good governance can help to prop up corrupt, authoritarian regimes that otherwise have a damaging impact in countries throughout Latin America. Presenting a more attractive alternative. In an era of geopolitical competition, many countries in the region have opted to reap the benefits of partnership with both the United States and China. Despite overt threats to decouple their respective economies from Beijing, leaders across Latin America—from Brazil's [Jair Bolsonaro](#) to El Salvador's [Nayib Bukele](#) and Argentina's [Javier Milei](#)—have continued to work closely with China, preferring a more expansive portfolio to fuel economic growth. In these contexts, the desire for diversification outweighs ideological disagreements, though it may also signal a growing dependency on Beijing too. It is also evident that voters value productive economic relations with China: [Recent](#) public opinion surveys from Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil underscore the belief that China's engagement is viewed as a net positive. **Despite this sentiment, the region is growing increasingly weary of some of Beijing's bad behaviors,** including debt traps, cheap goods flooding the market and crowding out domestic manufacturers, poor sustainability practices, and a continued dependency on raw material exports to fuel Chinese demand. There is also some frustration with recent [changes](#) in the scale and scope of China's regional investments, which have slowed significantly since their height during the 2010s. **These developments have created an opening for Washington to present a mutually beneficial and more appealing alternative to China, particularly as it looks to "nearshoring" or "friendshoring" to reduce its own economic dependencies on Beijing.**

## **China is trying to exclude the U.S. from Latin America now Piccone 2024**

Ted, Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy, Brookings, Managing the US China Competition in Latin America and the Caribbean 9/25,

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-are-the-united-states-and-china-intersecting-in-latin-america/>

As a region one step removed from the front lines of the growing strategic competition between the United States and China, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) may appear less important to the overarching geopolitical contest between these two powers. Yet

**China's dramatic expansion of activity in the LAC region across multiple domains** (financial, political, commercial, and security) and sectors (from presidential palaces to mayors to local businesses and media) **has upped the ante in Washington as leaders from both political parties look to counter Beijing across the board.**

The region's governments will likely remain below the fray by extracting the investments, support, and respect they seek from both countries without getting entangled in a direct superpower conflict. **The United States should be worried about China's growing influence in a region so geographically,**

**politically, and culturally close to its shores.** Over the last decade, China has been sowing the seeds of a multifaceted strategy to exert real pressure on the region's governments, which could be used to help counter direct threats to its regime—e.g., a conflict over Taiwan or a revived pro-democracy movement. Its posture as a so-called friend to the developing Global South will enable it to continue to secure some win-win outcomes, such as in building infrastructure and technology or solidifying ties with specific countries such as Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Bolivia. A confrontational U.S. response, however, risks falling into a well-worn trap of seeing the region only through a global security lens, as happened during the Cold War, the war against drugs, and the war against terrorism. The United States would be better off pursuing strong bilateral and regional relations founded on mutual interests and the values of building stable and healthy market democracies. Such partners would be capable of cooperating with it on priorities such as reducing illegal migration, combating cross-border crime and trafficking, lowering poverty and inequality, controlling climate change, and shoring up democratic institutions. In those countries where these interests align, a positive and well-resourced U.S. strategy to empower the region's reformers, rather than demanding fealty to challenge Beijing at every turn, would have a better chance of success over the short and long term. If or when China pivots toward a more directly hostile stance against U.S. interests in the region, however, Washington should be ready to push back in ways that minimize traditional anti-American resistance. **China's** long game [China's core interests in the region](#) are straightforward: it primarily seeks to secure the energy, metals, and food inputs it needs to fuel its economy and to expand export markets for both heavy and retail manufactured goods and, increasingly, technology products. **Secondarily, it sees the region as a zone of competition with its diplomatic rival, Taiwan (the Republic of China), which retains recognition and support from a (declining) number of sympathetic LAC governments. Third, it looks to compete with the United States in its own neighborhood in part to reciprocate, at least symbolically. Washington's long-standing and robust security presence in China's geographic orbit.**

## **China is engaging with Latin America now -- trade Lazarus 2024**

Leeland, Associate Director of National Security Policy, Brookings, China and Latin America, It's more than the economy, stupid, Brookings, 9/25,

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-are-the-united-states-and-china-intersecting-in-latin-america/>

For decades, most China-Latin America watchers focused on trade and economics. And for good reason. Today, **the People's Republic of China's (PRC) trade with Latin America and the Caribbean totaled \$450 billion, up from just \$18 billion two decades ago. The PRC is now South America's main trading partner,** and trade has expanded far beyond just raw materials and commodities to include traditional infrastructure (roads, bridges, ports) and "[new infrastructure](#)": electric vehicles, telecommunication, and renewable energy. **22 countries in the region have joined the PRC's Belt and Road Initiative,** and Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's recent remarks suggest his country [may soon follow.](#)

## US needs to focus on Latin America now -- engagement and resources are key Wirtschafter 2024

Valerie, Fellow, Foreign Policy and Emerging Technology, 9/25, A Response,

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-are-the-united-states-and-china-intersecting-in-latin-america/>

I think it is very telling that for the most part, we all landed on two similar points in our initial responses, albeit with significant nuances and minor divergences throughout. The two trends that I see running through most if not all of the initial reactions are: (1)

the belief that **to counter Chinese expansion in the region, the U.S. government needs to devote additional attention and resources to Latin America than it does right now, particularly given the salience of the region to domestic political dynamics; and (2) the United States should not force leaders in the region to choose between engagement with Washington or engagement with Beijing,** but rather present a better proposition to the region. These have been and continue to be vital pillars of a productive relationship with regional partners and seem to be important guiding principles in shaping how the United States should approach China's growing role in the Western Hemisphere. What I do hope for, and I think Piccone's response gets to this point effectively, is that we can extend beyond the question of countering China's role in shaping the United States' engagements throughout the region. **Latin American and Caribbean countries are too important to U.S. foreign and domestic policy to be driven entirely by this geopolitical**

**contest.** Regional challenges like migration, drug and arms trafficking, climate change, transnational crime, economic growth, and many others are critical to U.S. stability, with or without China in the fray. If China is the entry point for policymakers, so be it, but the need for collaboration is too deep to stop there.

## U.S. is failing to engage Latin America now -- China is filling the gap

O'Neil 2024

Shannon, Vice President and Rockefeller Senior Fellow for Latin America Studies,, Council on Foreign Relations,

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/united-states-missed-opportunity-latin-america>

**Yet the United States is failing to engage Latin America's nations commercially or strategically, missing an opportunity** to shore up national security and wasting built-in geopolitical advantages.

Indeed, **the United States cannot afford to overlook the opportunities Latin America offers. China already recognizes Latin America's potential. It is swooping in fast, expanding its trade with the region from \$12 billion in 2000 to nearly \$500 billion in 2022. Its mining and refining companies are moving to lock up access to the region's natural resources.** When it

comes to the countries south of the U.S. border, some American leaders may simply feel that good fences make good neighbors.

Taking that stance would be a big, counterproductive mistake. If the United States fails to integrate Latin America substantially into U.S. supply chains and keeps looking farther afield for economic allies, it will only help bring more Chinese influence closer to its

doorstep. ALL THE WRONG PLACES **Eighty percent of the U.S. supply of critical minerals comes from abroad, and the United States relies especially heavily on China for materials used in battery production** such as nickel, manganese, and graphite. Sixty percent of the microchips—and **90 percent of the most advanced kind of semiconductor chips—vital to both Americans' daily communications and U.S. national defense are manufactured in a nation under perpetual Chinese threat, Taiwan.**

Over 70 percent of the facilities that make the advanced ingredients on which the U.S.

pharmaceutical industry relies are located abroad, and the United States is running short of more medications than at any other point in nearly a decade. China has become the United States' biggest provider of many antibiotics, blood thinners, and chemotherapy and diabetes drugs, as well as the main source for the active ingredients in pharmaceuticals manufactured in India, a top source of imported U.S. medications. To shore up U.S. supply chains, the [Biden administration](#) has placed big bets on boosting domestic capacity and on better integrating Europe and Asia into U.S. manufacturing. The 2022 CHIPS and Science Act allocated tens of billions of dollars to build up U.S. domestic semiconductor production. The 2022 Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) offered electric-vehicle manufacturers subsidies of up to \$7,500 per car if most of the inputs are made in the United States or in countries with which Washington has free-trade agreements. The U.S. Department of Energy recently launched investments into more than two dozen critical minerals and materials projects across the United States, including lithium mines and refineries. And in November 2023, Biden announced a major initiative to encourage domestic pharmaceutical production, rebooting the pandemic-era authorization President Donald Trump gave the U.S. Defense Department to produce crucial medications. The pharmaceutical supply chain "is going to start here in America," Biden vowed. U.S. leaders consistently overrate the worth of securing alliances next door to China. The Biden administration's security and resilience efforts, however, are bound to fall short. Indeed, they already do.

Most of the money earmarked for domestic semiconductor production has gone toward the capital- and tech-intensive manufacture of chips in fabrication plants. But U.S. national security depends on controlling a fuller supply chain—from chip design to assembly, testing, and packaging. The vast majority of these steps still take place in Asia, particularly in China. New Arizona- and Texas-based fabrication plants will continue to have to send their chips back to geopolitical rivals for completion. Full back-end chip manufacturing is unlikely ever to take place solely in the United States: the final chips would be too costly to be commercially viable.

**In terms of electric vehicles, no U.S. ally in Europe or Asia will be able to undo China's control of the critical minerals these vehicles require. They don't have the natural resources, and environmental regulations and costs make large-scale refining in these regions less competitive.** And few of these nations qualify for the IRA's subsidies as they have not ratified free-trade agreements with the United States.

## **U.S. Engagement is key -- China is trying to fill in now and it's hurting Latin Americans O'Neil 2024**

Shannon, Vice President and Rockefeller Senior Fellow for Latin America Studies,, Council on Foreign Relations,  
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/united-states-missed-opportunity-latin-america>

But **a stronger U.S.-Latin American economic-security alliance would not just be nice to have: for both places, it is an urgent need.** China has recently transformed its presence in Latin America to play an important, even dominant, role in many of the region's economies—a development that seriously threatens both Latin American and U.S. interests. OPPORTUNITY COST Over the last two decades, **China has recognized opportunities in Latin America that the United States has overlooked.** It has assiduously courted Latin American governments by making loans, at times coercing them to withdraw diplomatic recognition from Taiwan. **China is now the largest trading partner for Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay and the second largest trading partner for a score of other nations,** accounting for nearly 20 percent of Latin America's total trade. Beijing has also become a significant banker in the region. China is now one of the only sources of outside financing available to Argentina, Ecuador, and Venezuela. Beijing has curtailed its international lending since 2020, but it still comes through in emergencies: in 2023 alone, China stepped in twice to offer currency swaps to help Argentina meet its International Monetary Fund repayments during a volatile election season. Through its Belt and Road Initiative and other commercial forays, China has also become a big funder and builder of Latin American infrastructure. Its banks finance the mostly Chinese companies now building highways, ports, hydropower dams, solar power plants, and electricity grids in over 20 countries. It bankrolls energy and mining projects across the region, including an \$8 billion nuclear power plant in Argentina and a nearly \$10 billion copper mine in Peru. During the first two decades of the twenty-first century, these growing trade, financial, and infrastructure ties filled many Latin American governments' coffers and brought in much-needed capital. Yet China's growing role in the region has not been an unalloyed good. **As Latin America's trade with China ballooned, many Latin American economies simultaneously became less diverse, less sophisticated, and less equal.** China's economic activity in the Americas is lopsided: between 2015 and 2019, just five commodities—iron ore, copper ore, refined copper, soy, and crude oil—accounted for nearly 70 percent of Latin America's exports to China. China then sold finished goods back to the region, undercutting local manufacturers. China has recognized opportunities in Latin America that the United States has overlooked. Chinese investments tell a similarly ambiguous story. Beijing's foreign direct investment in the continent remains somewhat limited, at just six percent of the foreign capital that has flowed into the region over the last 20 years. This investment was concentrated primarily in natural resources, energy, and mining, only recently shifting a bit toward utilities and power generation. The loans that China provides are often opaque and onerous. They can feature high interest rates and provisions for immediate repayment if China or its companies feel slighted. The loans are often secured with natural resources as collateral at fixed and disadvantageous rates: between 2009 and 2021, when Ecuador had to send more than a billion barrels of oil to China to service some \$20 billion in loans, it sacrificed nearly \$5 billion it could have received on the open market. Many Chinese lenders to Latin America subordinate other creditors by demanding that they receive payments first in the event of a default, stymieing multilateral solutions to unsustainable sovereign debt loads. Chinese mining and other infrastructure projects are not known for their transparency—or for their adherence to domestic or international labor or environmental standards. Indeed, **local communities and NGOs in Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru are fighting Chinese companies, citing deforestation, water pollution, environmental degradation, and poor working conditions** in their numerous legal complaints. And China has used its growing importance to the region to pressure Latin American nations. In 2020, aligning himself with U.S. President Donald Trump, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro intimated that Huawei would be excluded from Brazil's 5G network. China then threatened to withhold COVID-19 vaccines from the country, and Bolsonaro had to relent. FRIEND WITH BENEFITS Since 2014, Latin America has lost its economic luster. **Growth has lagged behind other emerging markets:** Latin American economies have grown, on average, less than one percent over the last decade, far less than Africa, eastern Europe, and Southeast Asia. This sluggish performance has many drivers: COVID-19 arguably hit Latin America harder than any other region, and many governments there have struggled to ensure their populations' basic safety. Tens of millions of Latin Americans have lost their middle-class foothold as gains in fighting poverty and inequality in the first part of the twenty-first century have largely reversed. But China has also played a role in this reversal of fortunes. **China's expanding economic importance to Latin America is, in fact, part of why many of the region's nations have struggled to move up the value chain. Commodities now make up more, not less, of the region's exports than they did in 2000, dangerously concentrating economies that already lacked diversity.** Latin American countries, along with countries in Africa, have suffered premature deindustrialization as their manufacturing sectors shrank in size and economic importance before their economies matured

## Link Debate:

### **Arctic deployments have focus and resource trade-offs with other parts of the world Congressional Research Service 2023**

Changes in the Arctic, Background and Issues for Congress, O'Rourke, Ronald, Specialist in Naval Affairs, Caitlin Keating-Bitonti, Laura Comay, Pervaze Sheikh, Analysts, Natural Resource Policy, Jon Finetelli, Transportation Policy Analyst,

<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R41153/196#:~:text=Definitions%20of%20the%20Arctic,-There%20are%20multiple&text=Policy%20discussions%20of%20the%20Arctic.rely%20on%20any%20one%20definition.>

**In light of great power competition** and increased human activities **in the Arctic resulting from the diminishment of Arctic ice, some observers argue that there is a need to devote more U.S. attention and resources to the region.** 118 **On the other hand, great power competition is also being expressed in Europe, the Middle East, the Indo-Pacific, Africa, and Latin America. In a situation of finite U.S. policymaker attention and resources, the Arctic competes for attention and resources against these other regions.** Some observers argue that the United States is not allocating sufficient attention or resources to defend and promote its interests in the Arctic.119

### **Competing with China needs more resources Ellis 2024**

Evan, Professor, US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, Response, 9/25,

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-are-the-united-states-and-china-intersecting-in-latin-america/>

In our essays, my colleagues generally agree that PRC engagement impacts not only the region's economies but also its political dynamics and discourse, presenting important security issues that affect U.S. interests. Yet while **the region widely perceives that the United States seeks to force a choice between it and China as a partner, that has actually never been the actual policy,** neither under President Donald Trump nor

\*President Joe Biden. **That perception, however, is problematic for the U.S. relationship with the region, as is the common assumption that the principal way for the United States to "compete" with China is by providing more resources to solve the region's problems. That course oversimplifies both the limits of the U.S. market-based, democratic political system and its institutions, as well as the risks posed by the PRC,** to which the United States must effectively respond.

## **We must compete with China for influence in Latin America now -- attention and resources are key**

**Kroenig, Marczak and Cimmino 2024**

Matthew, Jason, and Jeff, The Atlantic Council, AC Strategy Paper 2/12, A strategy to counter malign Chinese and Russian influence in Latin America and the Caribbean,

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/atlantic-council-strategy-paper-series/a-strategy-to-counter-malign-chinese-and-russian-influence-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean/>

### **The United States and its allies are engaged in a global strategic competition with China**

and Russia. The primary theaters for this contest are Europe and the Indo-Pacific, but China and Russia also are increasing their malign influence in the Global South, including Latin America and the Caribbean. **Their malign actions threaten the United States in its own hemisphere and must be a high priority** for US foreign and defense policy.

**The United States must actively compete with** Russia and, especially, **China; otherwise, nations in the region may continue to be persuaded to prioritize engagement with these autocratic rivals** over the United States in all or most sectors. **Unfortunately, the US approach to the region has been marked by strategic errors, including a problematic lack of attention and inadequate efforts to use all tools of national power to compete with China** and Russia. **The consequences of inaction are too high.** What might start, for example, as a set of seemingly harmless infrastructure projects could end up with Chinese control of vital chokepoints for sea lines of communication, such as the Panama Canal. More broadly, **a failure to act appropriately now will leave the region under the influence of America's chief authoritarian rivals.**

## **Multi-tasking in international affairs is hard**

**Bierman, Los Angeles Times, 2022**

Noah, May 19<sup>th</sup>, Why Russia's war in Ukraine complicates President Biden's first trip to Asia, <https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2022-05-19/why-russias-war-in-ukraine-complicates-president-bidens-first-trip-to-asia>

**But can't the administration walk and chew gum at the same time?** Why can't the White House pay attention to Ukraine while still pivoting to Asia? **"They'll no doubt say that,"** said Susan Thornton, a retired diplomat who spent nearly three decades focusing on Asia. **"It's the biggest lie in government,** but they'll say that." Thornton and other experts said that **handling multiple crises and strategic initiatives is actually very hard. Time is finite, as is the focus of senior advisors and Cabinet secretaries. The U.S. is also spending money and building weapons as part of the effort in Europe, thinning its resources.** Kurt Campbell, coordinator for Indo-Pacific affairs at the National Security Council, said it was clear the White House was focusing intense attention on Ukraine. At a forum at the U.S. Institute of Peace in Washington last week, Campbell said the war was "animating" for Biden and his senior team during "an incredibly intense period, a critical period."

## **And any diplomatic effort spent doing the plan will trade off with other issues.**

**Anderson and Grewell, PERC, 2001**

Terry, Director and Bishop, Research Associate, Political Economy Research Center – Fall Chi. J. Int'l L. **Foreign policy is a bag of goods** that includes issues from free trade to arms trading to human rights. **Each new issue in the bag weighs it down, lessening the focus on other issues and even creating conflicts between issues.**¶ Increased environmental regulations could cause countries to lessen their focus on international threats of violence, such as the sale of ballistic missiles or border conflicts between nations. **As countries must watch over more and more issues arising in the international policy arena, they will stretch the resources necessary to deal with traditional international issues.** As Schaefer writes, "Because **diplomatic currency is finite . . . it is critically important that the United States focus its diplomatic efforts on issues of paramount importance to the nation.**

**The U.S. needs to focus on Latin America now -- resources, focus are key**  
**Kroenig, Marczak and Cimmino 2024**

Matthew, Jason, and Jeff, The Atlantic Council, AC Strategy Paper 2/12, A strategy to counter malign Chinese and Russian influence in latin america and the caribbean,

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/atlantic-council-strategy-paper-series/a-strategy-to-counter-malign-chinese-and-russian-influence-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean/>

**The United States has paid a problematic lack of attention to the region**, which has resulted in the United States **ceding unnecessary ground to China** and Russia. **This has been driven by a lack of adequate prioritization of Latin America** and the Caribbean in strategic competition. **This lack of attention has resulted in diminished resources and focus that could have been devoted to building strong, results-oriented partnerships that counter Chinese** and Russian malign **influence**. Correcting this problem is a necessary step to success in the region and the United States must reprioritize the region amid new realities of strategic competition with China and Russia. In addition, **the United States has inadequately utilized all tools of national power to compete with China** and Russia in Latin America and the Caribbean, especially with regard to fully utilizing economic tools and strategic messaging to counter Chinese and Russian malign influence. Furthermore, there has been a failure to develop serious alternatives to the proposals and partnerships offered by China and Russia in the region. The United States must develop alternatives to Chinese regional projects, particularly in the economic sphere, and be clear that partnering with the United States offers a better path for independence, growth, and sovereignty. Finally, the historic policies of the United States toward the region have bred distrust. During the height of the Cold War, and in the early part of the twentieth century, the United States regularly interfered in the domestic affairs of Latin American nations. Trust between many countries in Latin America and the United States is still low. Both China and to a lesser extent Russia lack the previous history of intervention in the region.

**Specifically, the U.S. needs to stop leaving Latin America out of critical mineral strategy**  
**Kroenig, Marczak and Cimmino 2024**

Matthew, Jason, and Jeff, The Atlantic Council, AC Strategy Paper 2/12, A strategy to counter malign Chinese and Russian influence in latin america and the caribbean,

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/atlantic-council-strategy-paper-series/a-strategy-to-counter-malign-chinese-and-russian-influence-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean/>

Applying the aforementioned tools, **the United States can prioritize Latin America and the Caribbean** in several ways. **Economically, the United States needs to devote substantial attention to the strategic sectors of** energy, technology, space, and **critical minerals**, among others, **where Chinese dominance and malign influence could more significantly undermine US interests**. Already, the United States has taken some steps toward this end in recent years. For example, both the Trump and Biden administrations called for reviews of the US critical minerals supply chain and directed federal resources to strengthen the US mining sector. **The launch of the Minerals Security Partnership in June 2022 was a good step,<sup>79</sup> but the failure to include any South American nations is a key oversight, and the United States should work to engage regional partners in the effort.<sup>80</sup>**

**New diplomatic efforts take considerable time – this trades off.**

**Arnold, United States Marine Corp, 1998**

Roy, Lt. Col. UMSC, “Diplomacy in a Post Cold War World,” National Defense University, National War College, September 1998, <http://www.ndu.edu/library/n1/99-E-06.pdf>

**Time** has been touched on already and **is clearly a factor that drives diplomacy, It is a scarce resource, finite and with no suitable substitute.** Since **time** is a finite resource, it **must be managed,** not only in the traditional sense of allocating time for tasks and setting time goals for long range objectives, but also for the management of *perceptions*. **Diplomacy can be thought of as occurring on three different time scales. Normal time,** associated with the routine and continuing actions described earlier and the interagency formulation of policy in the deliberate setting. **Crisis time, where actions appear to have accelerated and where delays are perceived to exert a disproportional cost** to the effective resolution of the crisis. Finally, there is **a transitional period where time perceptions are oscillating as the Immediacy of the crisis recedes and the policy process begins to transform crisis decisions into deliberate policy.**

**New security policy requires significant and long-term diplomatic commitments from the United States.**

**Bergmann and Schmitt, Center for American Progress, 2021**

Max and Alexandra, 5/11, March A Plan To Reform U.S. Security Assistance By,

[https://\\*americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/SecurityAssistance-report1.pdf](https://*americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/SecurityAssistance-report1.pdf)

Today, **U.S. aid to build up a partner’s military should be viewed through the lens of competition between states, in addition to the ongoing counterterrorism concerns and state fragility challenges, with much higher stakes for U.S. foreign policy and national interests.** This renewed geopolitical competition is at its core an ideological competition between states. **China’s rise and Russia’s resurgence require the United States to realign its foreign policy toward strengthening relations and bolstering democratic states.** Security assistance is a tool to do so: It strengthens America’s closest partners and fosters closer relationships with other states. **When a country accepts U.S. military equipment or enters into a long-term procurement or acquisition of U.S. defense equipment, they are tying their country to the United States. The U.S. decision, for instance, to provide military aid to the United Kingdom through the lend-lease program in the 1940s was not a simple military consideration but a foreign policy consideration with enormous consequences.**<sup>7</sup> Today, **U.S. decisions to provide weapons or support tie American officials to how that support is used—whether they like it or not—**as the case of U.S. support to the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen demonstrates. Moreover, **countries that receive U.S. military systems are not just buying equipment off the shelf; they are entering into a longer-term relationship with that country for training, maintenance, and sustainment.** This is similar to when a consumer buys a smart phone, as they are not simply buying a piece of hardware; they are reliant on the company to access its broader ecosystem of apps and software and trusting the company to safeguard important data. **Over time, a consumer becomes locked in and dependent on a particular provider.** Similarly, **when a state commits to expanding military-to-military ties—often the most sensitive area for a country—they are making a diplomatic bet on that country.** As they base their military on U.S. equipment and U.S. training and engagement, **they similarly become locked in to the United States.** **This** sets the ground for more productive American partnerships to tackle a range of geopolitical challenges. For example, U.S. security assistance has been key to building ties with Vietnam after the war between the two countries. American assistance provided to clear unexploded ordnance has helped repair diplomatic relations between Hanoi and Washington, while the recent provision of a retired Coast Guard ship to the Vietnam military **can help strengthen military ties and potentially open the door to more U.S. assistance and security cooperation,** which will further strengthen bilateral relations.<sup>8</sup>

**The US can't focus its attention in multiple strategic theaters—Afghan/Iraq Wars prove, and leaders overestimate their capabilities, promising more than they can deliver.**

**Rajagopalan Jawaharlal Nehru University, 2013**

Rajesh, Professor in International Politics at the Centre for International Politics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, "Why India-US should look at developing a soft alliance," The Economic Times, July 22nd,

[http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-07-22/news/40727730\\_1\\_india-us-strategic-dialogue-attentionspeech](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-07-22/news/40727730_1_india-us-strategic-dialogue-attentionspeech)

In his speech, **Biden argued that Europe will continue to be the "cornerstone" of America's global engagement.** In addition, though Biden only briefly mentioned the Middle East, Kerry has had a breakthrough in restarting the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. But it came after a lot of shuttle diplomacy, and as the real negotiations resume in the coming weeks, American attention is likely to shift towards the Middle East. One unfortunate consequence could be that its attention to the Asian region will flag. **Biden has dismissed such concerns, arguing that great powers can** do all these things simultaneously, that they can **"walk and chew gum at the same time"**, as he put it. Maybe the US can indeed walk and chew gum, but **recent experience suggests that the US has difficulty in focusing on multiple strategic theatres at once . With the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the US's attention to the Asian region waned for almost a decade . The fact that the US had to "pivot" back to Asia shows that Asian concerns about Washington's propensity to take its eye off the ball are not misplaced .** Commentators in the region have already noted the mixed message in Biden's speech.

**And the affirmative plan will trade off with other international priorities**

**Cooke and Downie, CSIS 2010**

Jennifer, Director, and Richard, Deputy Director, CSIS Africa Program, based in Washington, DC- "African Conflicts and US Diplomacy" A Report of the CSIS Africa Program and the American Academy of Diplomacy- January 10, 2010

[http://www.academyofdiplomacy.org/programs/Ross/AAD\\_CSIS%20Africa%20Program%20Final%20Report%20Oct2009.pdf](http://www.academyofdiplomacy.org/programs/Ross/AAD_CSIS%20Africa%20Program%20Final%20Report%20Oct2009.pdf)

U.S. engagement can take on many forms, ranging from humanitarian assistance to diplomacy to military action. **Given finite resources and capacities, the United States must often make hard choices on how much diplomatic capital to invest in crisis or conflict situations. It cannot invest equally in every crisis or potential crisis. In intervening in these situations, decisionmakers must be careful** and sensitive in setting ground rules for engagement since intervention is never impartial—it can decide, for better or worse, who governs, who eats, and who survives. At the same time, setting rules for where, when, and how to intervene has become more difficult as U.S. interests in Africa have become harder to define following the end of the Cold War.

**Diplomatic focus trades-off**

**Fruend, Jerusalem Post, 2008**

Michael, 3/25, "The price of Washington's obsession with the Palestinians," Jerusalem Post, <https://www.pressreader.com/israel/jerusalem-post/20080326/282003258136518>

But **there is a much deeper, and even greater, cost involved in all the American time and energy** that are being expended on cajoling the recalcitrant Palestinian leadership. For just as **there are a finite number of hours in the day, so too there are a finite number of issues that senior US diplomats can grapple with. And the more time they spend** banging their heads against the Palestinian wall, **the less they have to devote to a far more pressing matter,** one which threatens to shake the foundations of the entire region - the growing danger of a nuclear arms race in the Middle East.

**Trying to do too much at once leads to failing -- resources, attention, political will  
Walt, Harvard University, 2009**

Stephen, Professor, Harvard University, "Nibbled to death by ducks?" 7-27-09, Foreign Policy, [http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/07/27/nibbled\\_to\\_death\\_by\\_ducks](http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/07/27/nibbled_to_death_by_ducks).

Moreover, **trying to advance the ball on so many different fronts simultaneously carries its own risks.** In particular, it provides governments that are opposed to some or all of Washington's agenda with an obvious way to respond: they can "just say no." In *Taming American Power*, I labeled this strategy "balking," (a term suggested to me by Seyom Brown) and I argued that it was a common way for weak states to prevent a dominant power from imposing its will. In a world where the United States remains significantly stronger than any other power, few states want to get into a direct test of strength with Washington. But American power is not so vast that it can simply snap its fingers and expect everyone to do its bidding. Why? Because exercising leverage is itself costly, and the more you do in one area, the more latitude that opponents somewhere else are likely to have. **There are still only 24 hours in a day, and the White House can't devote equal attention and political capital to every issue.** So states that don't want to do what Obama wants can delay, dither, obfuscate, drag their feet, or just say no, knowing that **the United States doesn't have the resources, attention span, staying power, or political will to force their compliance** now or monitor it afterwards. An even better tactic (perfected by a number of close U.S. allies) is to pretend to comply with American wishes while blithely going ahead with their own agendas. So NATO allies promise to increase their defense efforts but never manage to do much; Israel promises to stop building settlements but somehow the number of illegal settlers keeps growing, the Palestinians pledge to reform but make progress at a glacial pace, Pakistan suppresses jihadis with one hand and subsidizes them with the other, Iran agrees to negotiate but continues to enrich, China says it will crack down on copyright violations but the problem remains pervasive, and so on. In *On War*, Carl von Clausewitz famously described what he termed the "friction" of warfare; the accumulated set of minor obstacles and accidents that made even the simplest of objectives difficult to achieve. The same problem can arise **in foreign policy**: even when everything is simple, **"the simplest things are very difficult."** States that oppose what the United States is trying to do have lots of ways of increasing that friction without triggering an actual crisis. In other words, Obama's foreign policy may fail not because he loses some dramatic confrontation, but simply because a whole array of weaker actors manage to grind him down. In this scenario he doesn't get vanquished, just "nibbled to death by ducks." Obama took office with energy, a new vision, an experienced team, and lengthy "to-do" list. But one can already sense the forward motion slowing, which will encourage opponents to dig their heels in deeper and throw more obstacles in his path. **If the administration keeps trying to do everything at once, there is a real danger that their actual foreign policy achievements will be quite modest. The sooner they decide which goals they think they can actually bring off, and focus their energies there, the more likely they are to succeed. And a few tangible successes now might actually make the other items on their agenda easier to accomplish later on.**

**Can't focus on multiple issues at the same time, even if they could -- leadership, budgets  
Etzioni, George Washington University, 2012**

Amitai – Professor International Affairs George Washington, "The United States' Premature Pivot to "Asia"" Soc Vol 49, p 395-399,

[http://icps.gwu.edu/files/2012/09/A446\\_the\\_United\\_states\\_premature\\_pivot\\_to\\_asia.pdf](http://icps.gwu.edu/files/2012/09/A446_the_United_states_premature_pivot_to_asia.pdf)

**Even if one disregards the budgetary pressures** and the thesis that the most important measures the U.S. has to undertake to shore up its power is to put its economic house in order, **one should not disregard the leadership and political capital issues. Theoretically there seems to be no reason the White House, National Security Council, and DOD planners could not pay full attention to two fronts or even more. However, the historical record shows that preoccupation with one front tends to shortchange the other. The Bush administration, it has often been noted, focused on Iraq and neglected Afghanistan.** The challenges in the Middle East are very taxing. The U.S. has not developed a strategy for dealing with Pakistan, a way to stabilize Afghanistan or, arguably, Iraq, is flailing in its dealings with Iran, and is confused about how to deal with a Middle East that is trending toward Islamic majorities. Pivoting to the Far East will prove a major distraction at this point in time. It may be tempting to score diplomatic victories by wooing Vietnam and Burma away from China, but it will do little for U.S. stature as a global power if, meanwhile, its allies in the Middle East feel betrayed because Iran is pushing them around. The U.S. may view it as a sign of prowess that it has a naval presence in the South China Sea and keeps it free to international navigation (although nobody ever sought to restrict it), but this presence will not secure the future flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz.

## **The plan causes strategic insolvency from creating tradeoffs in finite resources**

### **Brooks 2014**

Rosa, 11/14, Professor, Georgetown University, Senior Fellow, New America/Arizona State University Future of War Project. Former Defense and State Dept. Official, Embrace the Chaos U.S. foreign policy is a mess -- a big, aimless mess. But the only way to build a grand strategy is to accept both global disarray and American decline.

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/11/14/embrace-the-chaos/>

**In a world of finite resources, there will always be trade-offs — and if we refuse to consider those trade-offs thoughtfully, we risk strategic insolvency.** We should focus our foreign-policy resources on building the long-term global architecture that is likely to best protect U.S. interests in an uncertain future, one in which we may be far less rich and powerful. **But if we increase the energy we put in** to building an equitable and peaceful international order with fair and effective global governance structures, **where should we reduce our efforts?** Here, I'm generally in sympathy with Michael Mazarr, [Barry Posen](#), FP columnist [Steve Walt](#), and other thoughtful [advocates](#) of [selective engagement](#), [offshore balancing](#), [restraint](#), and [discriminate power](#). The United States should not be the world's cop of first resort. As Obama has rightly pointed out, the United States can't solve every problem — as noted, **we have less and less ability to influence others and control outcomes,** and direct U.S. action can cause backlash. We should step in directly as problem-solvers only after careful thought. As a general rule, we should intervene militarily to clean up short-term global messes only when doing so is essential to protecting our core interests. When our core interests are not at stake, we should intervene only when we can afford to do so without damage to our important longer-term priorities. **This will require U.S. political leaders to be far more disciplined about avoiding threat inflation and ignoring short-term political pressures, both domestic and international.** (With clearly articulated criteria for intervention and strong, consistent political leadership, this should not be impossible. The public appetite for military intervention is heavily influenced by the messages sent by political elites.) We should also **be more disciplined about recognizing the gulf between what we'd like to do and what we actually have the ability to do.** We may well have "the most powerful military in history," but our strategic nuclear arsenal won't reverse climate change or end the Ebola epidemic, and U.S. drone strikes can't prop up the imploding Iraqi government, end the Syrian civil war, or prevent violent extremist organizations from metastasizing.

**Trump's approach to diplomacy is single-minded. History proves that trade-offs happen -- Obama focused on terrorism not Russia, Trump let North Korea slide.**

### **Fontaine 2021**

Richard 2/8, Georgetown University Security Studies professor, Center for a New American Security CEO, formerly at the State Department, National Security Council, and Senate Foreign Relations Committee, February 8, 2021, "The Case Against Foreign Policy Solutionism", <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-02-08/case-against-foreign-policy-solutionism>

**Then there are the opportunity costs. The war on terror's all-consuming focus left Washington well informed about obscure offshoots of Boko Haram but underprepared and insufficiently informed about a revisionist Russia.** At the height of the Obama administration's efforts to secure a Middle East peace deal, an Indian diplomat wondered, "Why has your secretary of state chosen the international issue with the least chance of resolution and decided to devote maximum time, energy, and resources to it?" Such diplomatic expenditures could, a number of U.S. partners believed, have been better directed at the Indo-Pacific. **Trump's all-or-nothing summit diplomacy crowded out the possibility of a modest but meaningful rollback in North Korea's weapons programs. The time and attention of senior leadership represent a precious commodity, all too easily squandered if allocated disproportionately to insoluble challenges.**

## DOGE Link Magnifier

### DOGE has hugely reduced the government's capability to multi-task

#### Kamarck 2025

Elaine, 2/14, Founding Director, Center for Effective Public Management, Brookings Institution, How DOGE cutbacks could create a major backlash <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-doge-cutbacks-could-create-a-major-backlash/>

Cutting government budgets is broadly popular in theory, but **if Trump and Musk overcome legal challenges**

and succeed in large-scale downsizing, **they will find that cutting government can backfire on them.**

**By using an axe instead of a scalpel, they run the risk of throwing out the baby with the bathwater and eliminating essential functions. In its haste, DOGE is likely to disrupt**

**services the public supports, making the government less effective.** History shows that major

government failures are politically lethal, often more so than constitutional arguments. When both occur, they can create serious political problems for the president and the party in power. What counts as a major government failure? The Carter administration's botched rescue of the Iran hostages, the Bush administration's mishandling of Hurricane Katrina, the Obama administration's health care website crashes that delayed Obamacare sign-ups, the Biden administration's chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Trump administration's ineffective response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and many more. These are failures no president—no matter how skilled a communicator—can spin or deflect. Blaming predecessors or changing the subject won't work when the public can clearly see that something critical went disastrously wrong. If Trump's Department of Government Efficiency plans survive legal challenges, several major failures could follow—each landing squarely on the president's shoulders. As President Harry Truman famously said, "The buck stops here." Disruptions in distribution of Social Security and veterans' benefits. The federal payment system, which DOGE briefly controlled before a judge intervened, oversees Social Security payments, among other critical functions. Disruptions to this system could have serious consequences.<sup>1</sup> Plenty. DOGE has been using AI systems to explore these databases, but AI is prone to hallucinations.<sup>2</sup> As Brookings scholar Darrell West warns "it is scary to use untested or poorly designed AI on government data sets not knowing how it makes decisions or where and how it was trained." Unlike the turmoil at Twitter when Musk took over, disruptions in federal programs would have severe real-world consequences. A brief outage on X may be inconvenient, but delays or errors in Social Security, Medicaid, or veterans' benefits payments could be devastating—especially for the roughly **40%** of retired Americans over 60 who, as of 2013, relied solely on Social Security for income while working fewer than 30 hours per week.

Potential delays in tax refund processing Disrupting the IRS database could have even more widespread consequences. In 2023, 69% of Americans received tax refunds from the IRS, with an average refund of **\$2,812**. Many taxpayers intentionally over-withhold and rely on their refunds each spring for major purchases, like a new refrigerator. Now, imagine if, due to DOGE's actions, refunds were delayed until November 2025 instead of arriving in the spring and summer. Or worse—if errors in newly written code caused refunds to be incorrect. Taxpayers would be outraged over delays or mistakes in something as crucial as their refunds, where the stakes are high and expectations are clear. Increased tax evasion leading to reduced federal revenue Currently, the IRS employs more than half of the Treasury Department's workforce. Tax experts have long argued that the IRS needs more employees, not fewer. The "tax gap"—the estimated difference between what the IRS collects and what taxpayers actually owe—is estimated at **\$428 billion**, with most of it resulting from underreporting and a smaller portion from non-filing. Increasing tax enforcement alone could significantly contribute to the Department of Government Efficiency's goal of saving \$1 trillion to \$2 trillion. In reality, the opposite is more likely. As my Brookings colleague Vanessa Williamson has **noted**, "Cutting the IRS is a top Republican priority." With fewer staff, the risk of being audited decreases while the incentive to underreport increases. That's not a sustainable way to reduce the deficit. Increased risk of mortality from foodborne illnesses The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) uses a "traceback system" to track foodborne illnesses. "Investigators trace food that ill people report eating all the way back to a farm or production facility," **the FDA explains**. "Finding commonalities in the supply chains of foods eaten by ill people helps investigators zero in on a potential source of the outbreak." Foodborne illnesses affect millions of Americans each year, leading to thousands of deaths—especially among the elderly and those with other health conditions. The traceback process is laborious, involving the FDA, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and state and local health departments. Widespread cuts could significantly undermine the government's ability to identify the source of these outbreaks.

Further strain on an already fragile agricultural economy could exacerbate global food insecurity In its rush to shut down USAID, DOGE risks further harming the already fragile farm economy. According to the Washington Post, "American farms...supply about 41% of the food aid that the agency, working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, sends around the world each year, **according** to a 2021 report by the Congressional Research Service. In 2020, the U.S. government bought **\$2.1 billion** in food aid from American farmers." On February 3, DOGE released a list of **USAID-funded grants** it claims could be categorized as waste and abuse. However, the total amount of targeted grants with specific numbers only adds up to roughly \$12.1 million. Could these grants be cut without jeopardizing the \$2.1 billion paid to American farmers and sent to people in need? The approach taken by DOGE is a clear example of discarding both the good and the bad, impacting both red and blue states alike. Reducing intelligence personnel at the CIA or FBI could increase the risk of domestic terrorist attacks In a surprising move on February 3, the CIA sent an **unclassified email** to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) listing individuals hired over the past two years. Many of these hires were focused on strengthening U.S. intelligence on China, a growing national security concern. The email potentially exposed the identities of clandestine personnel, and OPM then used it to offer buyouts—making it the first national security agency to do so. Reducing the CIA or FBI workforce in an era of asymmetric warfare, when threats to U.S. security can emerge from places most Americans have never heard of, may be, as intelligence expert **David Ignatius** put it, "the Trump administration's most dangerous misstep." The failure to prevent 9/11 was one of the most significant intelligence lapses in U.S. history—downsizing the CIA could risk a similar failure. **This list of potential failures extends across nearly every government agency.**

**Musk acknowledges the likelihood of mistakes,** saying no one can be perfect, and promises to fix problems quickly. But **government operations are not like the tech industry—errors** in issuing payments, tracking diseases, or ensuring aviation safety can have serious, **sometimes life-threatening consequences. If DOGE indiscriminately slashes budgets and fires essential workers, it risks disaster.** The fallout from major failures could hurt Trump's poll numbers and weaken GOP support.

**Musk acknowledges the likelihood of mistakes,** saying no one can be perfect, and promises to fix problems

quickly. But **government operations are not like the tech industry—errors** in issuing payments, tracking

diseases, or ensuring aviation safety can have serious, **sometimes life-threatening consequences. If DOGE**

**indiscriminately slashes budgets and fires essential workers, it risks disaster.** The fallout from

major failures could hurt Trump's poll numbers and weaken GOP support.

## **The reduced capacity makes trade-offs more likely, even before DOGE Wait 2021**

Stephen 1/21/21, professor of international relations at Harvard University, “A Face Lift Can’t Fix the State Department”, Foreign Policy,

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/01/21/a-face-lift-cant-fix-the-state-department/>

To be clear: **The State Department was in bad shape before former President Donald Trump showed up to make things worse. Its budget was woefully inadequate, its administrative and computer systems were antiquated, its organizational chart was outdated** and overly complicated, and it was repeatedly sidelined by presidents who preferred to run foreign policy out of the White House. Roughly **a third of U.S. ambassadorships were handed out to wealthy campaign contributors instead of trained professionals**—a bizarre practice that no other major power follows—and the department was sometimes forced to take on new missions in response to congressional whims rather than pressing needs.

## **Lack of diplomatic positions creates a lower threshold for a tradeoff argument – there isn’t anyone to fill in**

### **Hadar and Petrykowski, PBS, 2019**

Rory, 4/4, Iffil Fellow at Washington Week, bachelor’s degree in international politics from Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service, and Sandy, Emmy-award winning multimedia writer, producer, and reporter, “Key US ambassador posts remain vacant,” PBS, <https://www.pbs.org/weta/washingtonweek/blog-post/key-us-ambassador-posts-remain-vacant>

**Over two years into President Donald Trump’s administration, U.S. ambassadorships to 52 countries and international organizations like the United Nations remain vacant.** These include critical posts in the Middle East and Latin America. **The lack of a Senate-confirmed ambassador can hamper the ability of the U.S. to** conduct its diplomacy and **maintain its influence** in countries where embassy staffs are assigned to handle diplomatic affairs. According to the American Foreign Service Association, in at least 18 countries, including Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, Cuba, Honduras, Panama, and Brazil, the White House has not designated a nominee for Senate confirmation. Ambassador (Ret.) Barbara Bodine, Distinguished Professor in the Practice of Diplomacy at Georgetown University and former U.S. Ambassador to Yemen, says that not sending an ambassador sends a signal to a country that it is a lower priority for the U.S. Bodine added, “**I just don’t think there’s a sense of urgency in the administration to fill these senior positions.**” “By not appointing an ambassador to a country, you are saying that this country is not important to us, its issues are not important enough to us, we don’t care about it, and we are not going to bother to send an ambassador,” Bodine said.

## Impact Debate:

### China Scenario

**China wants to invade Taiwan by 2027, triggering a global conflict, but won't do so unless it can secure more political support from Latin America**

**Ellis 2023**

Evan, 1/26, Senior Analyst, CEEEP, Think Tank of the Peruvian Army, The Strategic Role of Latin America in a Global Conflict over Taiwan,

<https://ceeep.mil.pe/2023/01/26/the-strategic-role-of-latin-america-in-a-global-conflict-over-taiwan/?lang=en>

On the diplomatic front, while the tone of U.S.-PRC interaction over Taiwan may continue to improve, helped by U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken's expected trip to Beijing in early 2023,<sup>[23]</sup> President **Xi's informal timetable for reincorporating Taiwan by the end of his third term in 2027 will likely accelerate PRC efforts to diplomatically "flip" Taiwan-recognizing states. Beijing would seek to do so in order to internationally isolate the later as much as possible before engaging in its endgame of escalation and threats moving toward military action against Taiwan.** Candidates in Latin America to abandon Taiwan in the coming years include Honduras, whose President Xiomara Castro, when candidate, proclaimed her intention to recognize the PRC,<sup>[24]</sup> Paraguay, whose strongly pro-Taiwan President Mario Abdo Benitez will be replaced as President in August 2023, and Haiti, which will eventually have elections in which the majority of actors interested in replacing Haiti's current unelected President Ariel Henry, all want to recognize the PRC.<sup>[25]</sup> **Such changes, through non-transparent MOUs, and travel to the PRC by senior leaders and politically well-connected businesspeople, among other activities, will set the stage for dramatically expanding PRC influence in those states changing relations, in the process, decreasing the diplomatic restraints impeding a PRC move against the island.**

In short, despite the attempt by the Biden administration to manage the U.S.-China competition with a more positive tone, **the convergence of factors** involving the posture and direction of the Xi administration **suggests both a deepening of PRC engagement in Latin America, and an evolution for the worse of Taiwan's diplomatic and military situation in a way that could precipitate a crisis of global proportions** in which PRC presence in Latin America, particularly in strategic infrastructure like the digital domain, ports, and space, becomes militarily relevant. The following section examines what that could mean. PRC Strategic Imperatives Involving Latin America in a War Over Taiwan If a war breaks out over Taiwan PRC imperatives regarding Latin America will involve the political and economic, as well as military domains. Political and Diplomatic Preparations. In the political domain, **the change in diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to the PRC by a state in Latin America or the Caribbean could be one of the precipitating events that triggers** the unfolding of what will likely be **a pre-planned campaign to** intimidate, economically isolate, and **militarily move against Taiwan. Currently, eight of the 14 states continuing to recognize Taiwan are located in Latin America and the Caribbean.** The PRC may not wait until all states have derecognized Taiwan before acting against the island, since waiting would probably be unnecessary and lend itself to a level of predictability that could undermine the PRC military campaign. Nonetheless, **a flip to the PRC by one of the last politically and economically significant states in the region currently recognizing it, or a flip by multiple states in close succession,** in combination with the prior meeting of other military and political conditions such as an event indicating a change in Taiwan's political or military will to resist,<sup>[26]</sup> or an indication of U.S. hesitancy to fully defend Taiwan, **could be sufficient to set the PRC campaign in motion.**

**China is trying to flip Latin American countries against Taiwan -- once they get enough, they'll invade, triggering World War III.**

**The Economist 2025**

2/9, China's stunning new campaign to turn the world against Taiwan,

<https://www.economist.com/international/2025/02/09/chinas-stunning-new-campaign-to-turn-the-world-against-taiwan>

**FOR THOSE anxious about Chinese aggression towards the self-ruled island of Taiwan,**

there was a welcome signal at the end of Donald Trump's third week back in the White House. After talks with Ishiba Shigeru, the Japanese prime minister, on February 7th, the two leaders said America and Japan "opposed any attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force or coercion" in relation to Taiwan, which China claims as its own. This steely new language was a victory in

America's long quest to get its allies to show more solidarity with Taiwan. Yet **in the battle for global backing over**

**the island's fate, China is rapidly gaining ground.** By The Economist's count, 70 countries have now officially

endorsed both China's sovereignty over Taiwan and, just as crucially, that China is entitled to pursue "all" efforts to achieve

unification, without specifying that those efforts should be peaceful. Moreover, **the vast majority of those countries**

**have adopted that new wording in the past 18 months, after a Chinese diplomatic**

**offensive across the global south.** Our findings are consistent with those in a recent study by the Lowy Institute, an

Australian think-tank. It found that by the end of last year 119 countries—62% of the UN's member-states—had endorsed China's preferred wording for accepting its claim to sovereignty over Taiwan. Of them, 89 also backed China's unification efforts, with many supporting "all" such measures. (The Lowy Institute study did not quantify the latter group or specify when they adopted this

expansive language.) **China's latest diplomatic push appears to be designed to secure global**

**support for its broadening campaign of coercion against Taiwan.** That campaign includes the threat

of imposing a quarantine or inspection regime on Taiwan (huge Chinese military drills in October practised a blockade). A full-scale

invasion does not appear imminent, but American officials say that **China's leader, Xi Jinping, has ordered his**

**generals to have the capability to invade Taiwan by 2027.** China wants protection from the sanctions that

Western officials have discussed imposing in the event of a Taiwan crisis. By ensuring much of the world recognises the legitimacy of its actions, it makes it unlikely that sanctions or even censure could be imposed via the UN. It also means that global compliance with Western-led sanctions might be even lower than has been the case after Russia's attack on Ukraine. "It is plausible to conclude that nearly half of UN member-states have,

intentionally or not, formally endorsed a PRC (People's Republic of China) takeover of the island," noted Benjamin Herscovitch, a former Australian defence official, in the Lowy Institute study. How these countries would actually respond is unclear, he adds, but China would probably "portray these countries as having given the green light for its use of force". The 70 countries adopting the most pro-China language span Asia, Europe, Africa,

Oceania and Latin America; 97%, including South Africa, Egypt and Pakistan, are in the global south. In many of these countries, China has secured access to critical natural resources and financed ports and other transport projects through its Belt and Road infrastructure scheme. Among the most

recent examples is Sri Lanka, where Chinese companies have invested in two strategically important ports. When its president, Anura Kumara Dissanayake, visited China in January a joint statement said, for the first time, that Sri Lanka "firmly supports all efforts by the Chinese government to

achieve national reunification". That replaced a more vague phrase in a joint statement in 2024, which backed China's efforts to "safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity". Similar new wording appeared in a joint statement with Nepal in December. One of China's biggest coups came in

September, when 53 African governments signed a statement in Beijing. They agreed that Taiwan was Chinese territory and said that Africa "firmly supports all" China's unification efforts. At the previous such summit, in 2021, they did not explicitly mention Taiwan but backed "resolving territorial and maritime disputes peacefully". Even Malaysia, which has its own territorial dispute with China and typically avoids taking sides on Taiwan, has leaned

towards the Chinese position. In a joint statement in June 2024 Malaysia used new language recognising Taiwan as Chinese territory "in order for China to achieve national reunification". It stopped short of endorsing "all" unification measures, but dropped an earlier call for "peaceful" efforts to that

end. **The shift suggests that China's influence in the global south continues to grow** even as its

overseas lending has declined and many developing countries have had problems servicing Chinese loans. **America and its allies,**

**meanwhile, have failed to incentivise poor countries to resist Chinese pressure over**

**Taiwan,** partly because of a reluctance (until Mr Trump came back) to link aid to foreign-policy goals. Because there are so many developing

countries, they could play a decisive role in judging the legitimacy of any Chinese act of aggression against Taiwan—and of any American-led attempt to intervene. China would rally support for its actions at the UN, while America and its allies would urge members to join them in condemning China

and imposing sanctions. And the West, it seems, would face a far tougher battle than it did in March 2022, when 141 of 193 UN members backed a resolution in the General Assembly demanding Russia's withdrawal from Ukraine. China's diplomatic offensive appears to be linked to the war in

Ukraine, says Ja Ian Chong of the National University of Singapore. **"Looking at the diplomatic isolation Russia**

**faced, they'd prefer to avoid that," and to ensure that China-friendly countries continue**

**to supply oil and other resources** (or allow trans-shipment through their ports) **in a conflict over Taiwan,** he

says. Besides, he adds, China "likes to appear legitimate". Dr Chong did a study of national positions on Taiwan in February 2023. That did not include countries that supported all China's unification efforts, because there were so few then. But it found that 51 accepted China's preferred formula for

defining its sovereignty claim over Taiwan. China appears to have won over at least 68 more countries since then, judging by the figures from the Lowy

Institute study and one published on January 17th by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), a London-based think-tank. Among those adopting firmer language is Russia, which has become increasingly reliant on Chinese imports to offset Western sanctions since its invasion of Ukraine. Still, even though others with close ties to China, such as North Korea and Serbia, have endorsed “all” China’s unification efforts, Russia has held back, endorsing only “initiatives” to that end. China has won other linguistic concessions, too. Some countries have adopted its preferred wording on Tibet, referring to it only as Xizang, the anglicised version of its Mandarin name, which Chinese officials have been trying to promote. China exaggerates the level of international support for its position on Taiwan, claiming there is a “universal” consensus in its favour. And some foreign officials may be unaware of the new wording’s nuances, cautions Meia Nouwens of the IISS. She links China’s efforts to its armed forces’ recent focus on what they call the “three warfares”—psychological, public opinion and legal—in preparing for a Taiwan conflict. China may also fear that its sovereignty claim is increasingly being challenged by the West. Japan is among several American allies that have recently made firmer and more frequent statements criticising Chinese military pressure on Taiwan and backing “meaningful” participation in the UN for the island, which is not a member. Bonnie Glaser of the German Marshall Fund, a think-tank, notes that much of Europe has recently woken up to the potential economic cost of Taiwan conflict. **“There have been conversations in many capitals about how countries can**

**contribute to strengthening deterrence” and impose costs on China in a war,** she says.

Words as weapons A more recent concern for China is that Mr Trump could coerce some countries to change their positions on Taiwan. Panama, for example, switched diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China in 2017 and signed up to Mr Xi’s Belt and Road infrastructure scheme the same year. But on February 6th, under pressure from Mr Trump, Panama withdrew from Belt and Road. It is also conducting an audit of a China-linked company

that controls ports adjacent to the Panama Canal. Of course, America could simply bypass the UN **if China attacked or blockaded**

**Taiwan.** American forces could unilaterally block shipping to and from China. But **America will also need access to**

**bases, ports and other facilities in the global south,** especially the Indo-Pacific. **And if a large**

**majority of countries view its response as illegitimate, even some of its allies might**

**waver.** It has been hard enough for the West to sustain international solidarity with Ukraine, whose sovereignty was not in dispute

before Russia invaded. **The battle for global support on Taiwan will be even harder-fought. And**

**China is already on the advance. ■**

## **China doesn’t need to win exclusion of the U.S., just non-alignment**

### **Berg 2024**

Ryan, 2/12, Atlantic Council, Director of the Americas Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies, China and Russia Engage Latin America and the Caribbean differently.

Both threaten US interests,

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/china-and-russia-engage-lat-in-america-and-the-caribbean-differently-both-threaten-us-interests/>

To this end, **China understands that LAC is still a region of sizeable US influence.** The

country’s leadership understands that it is unlikely to fully cleave US partners from the United States. **To this end, the**

**extent to which Beijing can grow support for the idea of “active nonalignment”—that is,**

**the foreign policy vision that holds that Latin America and the Caribbean should not**

**choose a side in a geopolitical competition between the United States and China,** and that the

region should be highly skeptical of geopolitical fault lines or blocs surrounding the idea of “democracy” vs. “autocracy”—it can

decrease the frequency of the region’s alignment with Washington, thus suiting its long-term geopolitical aims. If China cannot

overcome decades of US influence and convert LAC into a strategic asset for itself, **leaders in Beijing are content to**

**at least take LAC off the geopolitical chessboard, effectively neutralizing it as a potential strategic asset for the United States in long-term competition.**

## Economy Scenario

**Latin American Engagement is great for the U.S. Economy****O'Neil 2024**

Shannon, Vice President and Rockefeller Senior Fellow for Latin America Studies,, Council on Foreign Relations,

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/united-states-missed-opportunity-latin-america>

THE MISSING LINK **Latin America offers the best hope the United States has to diversify and relocate its vulnerable, highly consequential supply chains for critical minerals, semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, and large-capacity batteries—all four of the supply chains that Biden's administration identified as most crucial to U.S. security and prosperity. Latin America has ample reserves of half the over four dozen minerals Biden deemed critical.** The region has a particular abundance of the minerals needed to make batteries: it is estimated to hold 60 percent of the world's lithium reserves, 23 percent of the world's graphite, and over 15 percent of its manganese and nickel. **Latin America already mines a good amount of the world's copper, which is crucial for the construction of electric vehicles, wind turbines, and other green technologies.** Latin America also has a strong leg up through formal preferential trading ties, as a majority of all U.S. free trade agreements are with countries in the region. These reduce costs for importers and exporters, and safeguard investments. They also enable critical mineral providers to take advantage of U.S. subsidies for electric vehicles. **Mexico** can provide a further lift to the United States' ambition to build out resilient electric vehicle supply chains: its factories are already pillars of the North American car industry, and electric vehicle components manufactured in Mexico or Canada are eligible for the IRA's full set of subsidies. Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Panama are well positioned to take the place of Asian countries in testing, packaging, and other less capital-intensive and technologically intensive semiconductor steps: investments and initial facilities and pilot training programs are already underway in these countries. And to quickly boost resilience in its pharmaceutical supply, the United States need not look further than the Western Hemisphere. The region already produces tens of billions of dollars' worth of vaccines, active pharmaceutical ingredients, and consumer-ready medications every year and hosts sophisticated research and development institutes: Brazil's Butantan Institute and Oswaldo Cruz Foundation are among the 15 largest vaccine manufacturers in the world. Mexico already produces a variety of medicines and medical devices, exporting \$800 million in pharmaceuticals to the United States each year. Even smaller producers such as Argentina and Uruguay make over 30 percent of the drugs they consume. These manufacturing bases could become robust alternative suppliers. With the right investments in training and infrastructure, within a decade, American companies could be sourcing all the lithium they need from a vibrant Latin American "lithium triangle"—Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile—and partnering with busy factories in Mexico to produce electric vehicle batteries, plastic casings, and chargers. When U.S. patients ask their doctors where their children's mumps, measles, and rubella shots come from, the answer could be Brazil. American smartphones could feature chip technology tested and packaged in Panama. Most important, many more stages of the production cycles for America's most critical national security technologies could unfold close to U.S. borders. **FLAWS IN THE OINTMENT Latin America already has outsize access to the U.S. consumer economy. The United States is the region's largest trading partner, with more than \$1.1 trillion in goods and services exchanged each year.** It is also Latin America's biggest outside investor, contributing nearly 40 percent of all the foreign direct investment the region receives. **Latin America's political culture makes it a natural collaborator, too. Latin America is where democracy and development meet: over 550 million citizens there continue to use the ballot box to resolve their differences and address their grievances.** Public opinion in the region generally regards the United States better than its geopolitical rivals: recent surveys suggest that strong majorities of Argentines, Brazilians, Colombians, and Mexicans hold a positive view of the United States, outpacing any warmth of feeling for China and Russia. Four decades of polls collated in 2022 by the Centre for the Future of Democracy show that the United States has recently become more popular in Latin America, unlike in the rest of the developing world. So why is the United States neglecting to engage Latin America commercially or strategically? The CHIPS and Science Act is underwriting studies of Costa Rica's and Panama's ability to contribute to the semiconductor supply chain. And U.S. officials are working to beef up Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) funding to support American companies' bids for investment-ready projects in the region. But this does not reflect the ambition the United States needs.

**Economic instability causes global famine****Aalto 2024**

Eljas, June 13th Futures Platform, Future Trends, Scenarios, Is the global economy on the brink? Four scenarios of potential collapse,

<https://www.futuresplatform.com/blog/global-economy-collapse-future-scenarios>

**In a global climate marked by instability** and deficient monetary policies, **inflation spirals out of control**. As superpower rivalry intensifies, a weakening dependency ratio and stagnant productivity growth increase debt levels. **Prices for essential commodities and raw materials**—such as fertilizers, grain, and oil—**skyrocket**. **Despite the surging inflation, central banks find themselves unable to raise interest rates adequately due to political pressures and mounting debt. In an effort to revive struggling economies, new monetary stimulus programs are introduced**, but these measures backfire, **triggering hyperinflation. The economic shock is severe and immediate**. Global trade grinds to a near halt. Amidst the chaos, people hoard goods, and the barter system reemerges. **Starvation becomes rampant, with some regions facing deadly famine**. Western currencies are forcibly tied to the dollar, which provides a temporary solution to the problem of high indebtedness. Yet, the broader economic landscape remains fraught with uncertainty and instability as nations navigate the aftermath of these turbulent changes. Development path for scenario 1 **2025: Economic growth remains sluggish, with governments still running large deficits post-pandemic. Intensifying economic competition between China and the US leads to increasing trade tariffs and further strains global markets. 2027: China forms alliances and trade agreements with raw material-rich countries. Emerging markets significantly increase their share of Chinese exports, driving up global demand and prices for commodities.** 2029: A proxy war between the US and China erupts in the Pacific, causing severe supply chain disruptions. Economic prospects deteriorate sharply, with soaring inflation eroding wages and plunging many into poverty. 2030: Western central banks are reluctant to raise interest rates amid political and economic pressure. Instead, they implement monetary stimulus measures, causing inflation in Europe to spiral abruptly out of control. 2035: **The culmination of all these factors leads to a global famine.**

## **Sustained slow growth will cause a financial crisis**

### **Economic anxiety causes global war -- World Wars prove, conditions ripe for a repeat Lesser 2025**

Ian, German Marshall Fund, 4/25, From Economic Warfare to Global War,

<https://www.gmfus.org/news/economic-warfare-global-war>

At key points over the last century, **unbridled nationalism and economic warfare have driven geopolitical competition, with disastrous consequences. These destructive forces have been unleashed again with scant regard to the lessons of history.** The imposition of sweeping tariffs on global trade partners is not just a source of financial risk. **At a time of heightened global disorder, it moves the world one big step closer to large-scale conflict.** For the United States, this could be a conflict without the benefit of allies. The world has been here before. **In the decade prior to World War I, fear of relative economic decline drove strategic perceptions in ways that contributed to instability** in Europe, even—perhaps especially—against a backdrop of high economic interdependence. Both winners and losers of that enormously destructive conflict emerged convinced that economic instruments had shaped the outcome, for better or for worse. During the interwar years, virtually every major power, including the United States, had a ministry of economic warfare aimed at honing the capacity for sanctions, blockade, and export controls. US protectionism spurred a trade war among former allies. Germany and Italy aimed for economic self-sufficiency through industrial policy and territorial expansion. The Soviet Union sought economic autarky on its own terms. Japan, acutely aware of its dependence on foreign sources of critical resources, sought to preempt its exposure through aggressive expansion and the creation of a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere. In key respects, **World War II was the product of a toxic brew of nationalism, economic anxiety,** and faith in the power of political will to beat the strategic odds. Reflecting on this experience, three developments are particularly worrisome. **First, the slide from crisis to war can be rapid. In 1914, the security order in Europe collapsed within a period of weeks,** driven in large measure by a shared sense that caution would lead to disadvantage. This was a product of preexisting mobilization plans but also reflected the desire to transcend the damage from the severe disruption of global trade and finance already evident by the summer of 1914. **Existing anxiety over economic competitiveness and financial exposure reinforced the logic of war** and hastened the slide toward conflict. **Today, concerns of this kind abound on both sides of the Atlantic and in Asia.** Second, declining economic interdependence and the disruption of global value chains can be destabilizing in their own right. Nations may be antagonistic, with competing interests and objectives, but there will always be a cost-benefit calculus in relation to conflict and the use of force. China and the United States may indeed be ardent competitors, even adversaries, but the costs of economic disruption have always influenced strategy in Beijing and Washington. The perception that one or both sides simply have nothing to lose may not lead directly to deliberate conflict. But it could have a profound effect on behavior when things go wrong through provocation, brinkmanship, or an accidental clash. The escalatory costs of economic decoupling, much less active economic warfare, should not be underestimated. Third, in the 1930s, **tariff-fueled economic crises exacerbated social strains and supported the rise of radical ideologies and the collapse of the political center** in Western Europe and Japan. Nationalism, identity politics, and the drive for economic self-sufficiency were common characteristics in the interwar strategic environment. In the United States, these conditions supported the America First movement and a sovereignty-conscious disdain for European entanglements. It took Pearl Harbor and an internationalist president to wake the country from an inward-looking isolationist slumber. **Economic stress and social dislocation encouraged a search for culprits and conspiracies, and a general atmosphere of xenophobia. In this respect, among others, 2025 begins to look disturbingly like 1935.**

None of this is meant to suggest that an obsession with economic warfare leads inevitably to conflict, much less global war. But **the odds of such a progression, already significant, have shortened considerably.** And this could be a war the United States fights alone. Allies, even those alienated by trade frictions, might still be inclined to back Washington. But there is no guarantee, and **adversaries may be encouraged by the prospect that European and Asian partners will stand aside or hedge. The lesson is clear. Economic warfare can easily turn geopolitical competition into large-scale conflict.**

## Artificial Intelligence Scenario:

**Latin America is defining its policies around Artificial Intelligence now -- they'll either pivot towards the West and prevent A.I. disasters or follow China towards unregulated AI, spelling disaster**

**Daniel, 2025**

Maia Levy, 2/13, Research Associate, Brookings Institution, Regional cooperation crucial for AI safety and governance in Latin America,

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/regional-cooperation-crucial-for-ai-safety-and-governance-in-latin-america/>

**Over the past few years, artificial intelligence (AI) policy and legislation initiatives around the world have flourished—and Latin America is no exception** to this trend. Countries in the region

have been developing local regulations, policies, and initiatives from various perspectives to benefit from the use of this technology while preventing risks and harms. **However, the current regulatory landscape is still nascent, which**

**provides a unique opportunity** for the region. This post will discuss the current landscape and provide a series of recommendations for the region to shape AI safety and governance. The current landscape: Numerous bills and influence from the global north **Several bills are being discussed in different legislatures in the region.** For instance, legislatures in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay have seen [numerous initiatives](#) that intend to regulate the development and use of AI—whether **bills that regulate general uses of AI** or specific initiatives that focus on particular areas, such as health or disinformation. Nevertheless, most of them will not make it to the finish line. In general, bills tend to be quite vague, fail to provide actionable measures or a clear definition of AI, or grant the executive branch with excessive powers to define when and how regulations should apply. Peru, for example, passed the first AI [law](#) in the region in July 2023. This law aims to “promote the use of AI in favor of the country’s economic and social development,” while respecting human rights and use of AI that is ethical, sustainable, transparent, replicable, and responsible. As highlighted by [civil society actors](#), this law is merely declarative rather than actionable, as it does not propose any concrete measures to attain its goal. Moreover, bills usually mention human rights in passing, without further operational steps about how they will be guaranteed or about relevant procedures, such as human rights impact assessments. In addition, **legislative initiatives have been clearly**

**influenced by frameworks developed in the Global North.** Most of the bills have been noticeably shaped by the [European Union’s AI Act](#), which entered into force in July 2024. With a few alterations in some cases, bills in the region have adopted a [risk-based approach](#) to regulating AI, which categorizes AI systems into risk levels and assigns corresponding obligations and is one of the most salient characteristics of the EU AI Act. For instance, the [Brazilian bill](#) recently passed by the Brazilian Senate—one of the most developed bills in the region—has a risk-based approach. Other countries include Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Peru, and Uruguay. Thus, while it may be too early to say—as the Peruvian law is the only law already passed in the region—a **“Brussels Effect” may be taking place around AI regulation.** In terms of AI safety,

requirements can be found in some of the bills. Brazil’s bill, for instance, includes a specific section on safety, which addresses transparency, and the obligations to generate adequate documentation and implement trust evaluations, among others, as well as a section on algorithmic impact evaluations, which outlines a detailed methodology for its implementation. Other bills—for example, in Argentina and Costa Rica—as well as the Peruvian law, require impact evaluations, transparency, and the creation of public registries. However, except for the case of the Brazilian bill, which was the result of a three-year discussion that included the participation of relevant stakeholders, requirements are very generic and not consistent throughout the different bills. In some cases, they are mentioned as principles, without any further detail on how they should be implemented. For instance, a [Costa Rican bill](#)—which was, ironically, entirely developed by ChatGPT—states that “developers must implement technical and organizational measures to mitigate algorithmic biases and prevent unjust discrimination. The use of representative and diversified data will be promoted, as well as the revision and periodic audit of algorithms, to mend any biases and guarantee equitable results,” without mentioning any further actionable steps. Regional collaboration and emerging initiatives At the same time, the region is also going through a [“cooperation phase.”](#) In 2024, in Montevideo, Uruguay, the second [Ministerial Summit on the Ethics of AI in Latin America and the Caribbean](#) “brought together ministers, high-level authorities, and experts from 20 countries to discuss the implementation of AI public policies and strategies that promote innovation and mitigate harms.” This meeting followed the first one hosted in 2023 in Santiago, Chile, which resulted in the [Santiago Declaration](#). In 2024, the [Montevideo Declaration](#) focused on strengthening regional dialogues on governance and use of AI in Latin America and the Caribbean and was approved together with a [roadmap](#) that outlines the first few actions to be prioritized over the next year. Summits will take place [every year](#) “to analyze and discuss the development of regional policies on AI, and to follow up on the implementation of the approved Roadmap and its reviews.” Other recent regional initiatives include the [Ibero-American Forum of Digital Parliamentarians](#)—hosted in October 2024 to strengthen legislators’ capacities in Latin America and the Caribbean on AI regulation and policy design, focusing on promoting ethical, responsible, and inclusive use of AI—and the [Cartagena Declaration](#), which was adopted by 17 countries in the region to foster regional cooperation on responsible AI. Although these initiatives share the goal of advancing the development and use of AI models that are “ethical, responsible, and inclusive,” a more detailed and actionable approach is needed. Opportunities and the way forward **Latin America can benefit from AI, but it must establish**

**specific guardrails to prevent harms** and guarantee human rights.

## **China is trying to export its model of AI governance to the Global South, encouraging risky techno-authoritarianism and risky experimentation**

**Luong and Liu, National Bureau of Asian Research 2024**

Ngor, State Department Fellow for Security and Emerging Technology, , Charis, TFAS Intern, National Bureau of Asian Research, China's AI Governance: Engaging the Global South, <https://www.nbr.org/publication/chinas-ai-governance-engaging-the-global-south/>

**In terms of how the PRC is engaging with the global South community, the priority right now is messaging, particularly on how to further promote AI** for development, as well as the role that

China can play in bolstering other countries' AI innovation. **First, the PRC focuses on AI governance for**

**innovation, meaning running faster.** If you look at the Shanghai Declaration on Global AI Governance, there is a great deal of detail related to three components. The first is technical training, which includes calls for the establishment of cooperation platforms to facilitate technology transfer and commercialization. The second component focuses on data flows and calls for safeguarding high-quality data development with high-quality and high-level data security. That means promoting the free flow of data between countries and increasing cooperation to build datasets that can be trained to improve the quality of AI models. The final component concerns talent, which calls for more cultivation of AI professionals, more education and training, and improvement of AI literacy and skills around the world. So China is positioning itself as the leader and champion of education and AI training. In addition to AI governance for development and innovation, the PRC is also focusing on AI governance as it relates to risk management, specifically how AI technologies are developed in a way that manages risk. Risks can be related to cybersecurity, disinformation, abuse, or misuse, among other threats. But China does not have a good track record on this issue, especially when one considers 5G. Huawei's 5G equipment has massive security vulnerabilities with backdoors built in. There is definitely a need to read policy documents very closely and look at how they actually are implemented. What role do China-led multilateral platforms, such as the Digital Silk Road Initiative and Shanghai Cooperation Organization, play in achieving the country's AI governance strategy and promoting such a framework throughout the region? China has already laid the foundation to build its own version of multilateral platforms. As you mentioned, the Digital Silk Road is a key example. China-led international forums are meant to be leveraged to promote the PRC's ambition of AI governance in countries where there is little presence of the United States or its allies. The Digital Silk Road and related multilateral platforms have long played a really important role in the PRC's export of technology and talent, as well as training and research collaboration and infrastructure investment in data and cloud-computing centers. And we have seen evidence of this in Southeast Asian and Latin American countries. The decision document from the 2024 Third Plenum laid out economic policy for China. The PRC has renewed its interest in expanding international science and technology exchanges and collaboration as stated in that decision document. It also notes the implementation of **the Belt and Road Initiative's Science Technology Innovation**

**Action Plan, which seeks to strengthen multilateral cooperation for AI. So Chinese AI**

**governance strategy on the global stage does not happen in a vacuum.** To the PRC, AI development is related to surveillance, data governance, economic development, and its "going out" strategy. We have seen examples of AI enabling surveillance technology exported to Southeast Asia. In the realm of data governance, there is a growing global gap as the United States is pulling away from digital policy negotiations, and China hopes to fill that gap. The PRC is expected to create more opportunities for its companies to go out into different countries by negotiating data agreements and other ways to allow Chinese companies to localize in these countries. It is pretty clear that the promotion of the Chinese version of AI governance on the global stage is already built on top of existing channels. How does China balance its AI governance interests with those of other major powers while maintaining its leadership in the global South? In order to align its approach to AI governance with the development goals of the global majority, China is appealing to the region with a promise of economic benefits. First, it is calling for more applications of AI in different fields that are beneficial to society. Looking at the [Global AI Governance Initiative](#), those fields of AI applications include industrial innovation, environmental protection, and energy management, among other areas. The second component involves exporting safe city and smart city technologies that are leveraging AI for things like turbocharging traffic, logistics, law enforcement, and surveillance that may be attractive to certain types of governments around the world. Lastly, China calls for the respect of national sovereignty. As mentioned earlier, this principle is linked to the previous rhetoric around digital sovereignty and territorial integrity. There is an underlying objective here that is different from the U.S. version of digital

sovereignty. Once again, looking at the Global AI Governance Initiative, **China's version of AI governance** opposes using AI technologies for the purpose of manipulating public opinion. One can defensively argue that it **is code for controlling**

**public discourse. If you look at China's track record of AI governance domestically,** the

economic appeal is really how China is balancing its AI governance interests with those of other major powers in the region. And if we zoom out a little into the broader context of strategic competition, the global South countries have increasingly leaned toward the United States as a security partner and China as an economic partner. For instance, we know that **51 countries signed**

**on to the U.S. U.S. Political Declaration on Responsible Military Use of Artificial**

**Intelligence and Autonomy, but China is not one of them.** On the security front, China is not offering any clear commitments to mitigating military AI risks. So it is difficult to say that military AI risks are at the top of the country's priorities in promoting its version of AI governance on the global stage.

## AI makes authoritarianism worse

### Brands 2024

Hal, Senior Fellow, American Enterprise Institute, June 9th, 6 Ways AI Will Change War and the World,

[https://www.aei.org/op-eds/6-ways-ai-will-change-war-and-the-world/?mkt\\_tok=NDc1LVBCUS05NzEAAAGTsDq2uzx9MgBbbYXjKXI4a7qj97zqQbo9MyLdk--HV\\_h7M-T5GQwYujSJpWXJLNOsdqYqvEphPUmGY2FbZgxK8rGAX9VnKJ2IFKtUAFI0Z8SuMTMdXh5xJbtjBA](https://www.aei.org/op-eds/6-ways-ai-will-change-war-and-the-world/?mkt_tok=NDc1LVBCUS05NzEAAAGTsDq2uzx9MgBbbYXjKXI4a7qj97zqQbo9MyLdk--HV_h7M-T5GQwYujSJpWXJLNOsdqYqvEphPUmGY2FbZgxK8rGAX9VnKJ2IFKtUAFI0Z8SuMTMdXh5xJbtjBA)

What about a related nightmare — that AI will help the forces of tyranny control the future? Analysts such as Yuval Noah Harari have [warned](#) that **artificial intelligence will reduce the costs and increase the returns from repression. AI-equipped intelligence services will need less manpower to decipher the vast amounts of intelligence they gather on their populations — allowing them, for example, to precisely map and remorselessly dismantle protest networks. They will use AI-enabled facial recognition technology to monitor and control their citizens, while employing AI-created disinformation to discredit critics at home and abroad. By making autocracy increasingly efficient, AI could allow the dictators to dominate the dawning age.** This is certainly [what](#) China hopes for. President Xi Jinping’s government has devised a “social credit” system that uses AI, facial recognition and big data to ensure the reliability of its citizens — by regulating their access to everything from low-interest loans to airplane tickets. **Ubiquitous, AI-assisted surveillance has turned Xinjiang into a dystopian model of modern repression.** Beijing [intends](#) to seize the “strategic commanding heights” of innovation because it believes AI can bolster its domestic system and its military muscle. It is using the power of the illiberal state to steer money and talent toward advanced technologies.

## Runaway AI will kill us all -- trust the smartest minds of the last century

### Piper 2020

Kelsey, Vox Media, Future Perfect, Oct. 15th, The case for taking AI seriously as a threat to humanity,

<https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2018/12/21/18126576/ai-artificial-intelligence-machine-learning-safety-alignment>

Stephen [Hawking has said](#), “**The development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race.**” Elon [Musk claims that AI is humanity’s “biggest existential threat.”](#) That might have people asking: Wait, what? But these grand worries are rooted in research. Along with Hawking and Musk, prominent figures at [Oxford](#) and [UC Berkeley](#) and [many of the researchers](#) working in AI today believe that advanced **AI systems, if deployed carelessly, could permanently cut off human civilization from a good future.** This concern has been raised since the dawn of computing. But it has come into particular focus in recent years, as [advances in machine-learning techniques](#) have given us a more concrete understanding of what we can do with AI, what AI can do for (and to) us, and how much we still don’t know. There are also skeptics. Some of them think advanced AI is so distant that there’s no point in thinking about it now. Others are worried that excessive hype about the power of their field might kill it prematurely. And even among the people who broadly agree that **AI poses unique dangers**, there are varying takes on what steps make the most sense today.

## Affirmative Evidence

### Aff Uniqueness:

#### **Trump focusing on Latin America now – its key to his domestic policies Winter, Foreign Affairs, 2024**

Brian, Editor, Washington Quarterly, 12/10, Foreign Affairs, Latin America Is About to Become a Priority for US Foreign Policy,

[https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/latin-america-about-become-priority-us-foreign-policy?utm\\_medium=promo\\_email&utm\\_source=fa\\_edit&utm\\_campaign=post\\_release\\_trump\\_jf25\\_actives&utm\\_content=20250115&utm\\_term=all-actives](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/latin-america-about-become-priority-us-foreign-policy?utm_medium=promo_email&utm_source=fa_edit&utm_campaign=post_release_trump_jf25_actives&utm_content=20250115&utm_term=all-actives)

While traveling throughout Latin America in recent years, visitors heard the same refrain: **Washington isn't paying enough attention to the region.** Business leaders, academics, and politicians on both the left and the right agreed that the United States lacked a clear strategy for engagement and was losing influence and economic opportunities, especially to China.

**Such talk is hardly new. A 1973 article in Foreign Affairs warned that "the United States has no Latin American policy, save one of benign neglect."** But these laments seemed to reach a peak during the Biden administration, which was seen as too focused on the United States' growing rivalry with Beijing and the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East to devote even minimal bandwidth to its southern neighbors. As the adage goes, be careful what you wish for.

Donald **Trump's second presidency seems destined to focus more attention on Latin America than any U.S. administration in perhaps 30 years**, including the incoming president's first term.

The reason is straightforward: **Trump's top domestic priorities** of cracking down on unauthorized immigration, stopping the smuggling of fentanyl and other illicit drugs, and reducing the influx of Chinese goods into the **United States all depend heavily on policy toward Latin America**. His stronger-than-expected electoral mandate (winning the popular vote plus control of both houses of Congress) coupled with a substantial increase in the flows of migrants and narcotics since he first occupied the White House mean that Trump will be even more emboldened than before to pressure Latin American governments to help achieve his goals. He will resort if necessary to punitive measures including tariffs, sanctions, and perhaps limited military action, such as drone strikes against Mexican cartels, to try to get his way. **Trump's heightened interest in the region will be welcomed by fellow conservatives**, such as Argentine President Javier Milei, Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele, and others at a time when the ideological right appears to be ascendant throughout much of Latin America. **The appointment of U.S. Senator Marco Rubio as secretary of state**, if confirmed by the Senate, **would not only elevate a son of Cuban immigrants and fluent Spanish speaker but also make him probably the most well-traveled and -connected official on Latin American issues to serve at such a high level in Washington since Nelson Rockefeller** was

vice president under President Gerald Ford **in the 1970s**. Trump and Rubio's approach could, over time, bring new and unexpected opportunities for economic integration and investment to Latin American countries the administration perceives as cooperative and friendly.

## Trump will engage with Latin America – religion, crime, and China Winter, Foreign Affairs, 2024

Brian, Editor, Washington Quarterly, 12/10, Foreign Affairs, Latin America Is About to Become a Priority for US Foreign Policy,

[https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/latin-america-about-become-priority-us-foreign-policy?utm\\_medium=promo\\_email&utm\\_source=fa\\_edit&utm\\_campaign=post\\_release\\_trump\\_if25\\_actives&utm\\_content=20250115&utm\\_term=all-actives](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/latin-america-about-become-priority-us-foreign-policy?utm_medium=promo_email&utm_source=fa_edit&utm_campaign=post_release_trump_if25_actives&utm_content=20250115&utm_term=all-actives)

Perhaps ironically, some **Trump backers believe that the United States' competition with China may ultimately be what compels the president-elect to pursue a more constructive relationship with Latin America. If Trump is truly intent on reducing Chinese imports, the theory goes, he may see allied countries in the Western Hemisphere as alternative sources of cheap labor that would help strengthen the U.S. supply chain. The growth of near-shoring, which accelerated under the Biden administration, could also boost the economies of the region—and, over time, give potential migrants a reason to stay home.** In a July essay for Americas Quarterly, Claver-Carone cited “the inextricable link between U.S. national security and mutual economic growth” in the hemisphere and proposed using the Development Finance Corporation and other U.S. agencies to finance investments and “Make the Americas Grow Again.” It is unclear whether Trump, once in office, will come to see Latin America as more of an opportunity than a threat. But such integration-minded proposals and other parts of the Trump agenda would win considerable support in a region eager for economic growth and greater engagement with Washington. Even Trump’s immigration and deportation policies may find sympathy at a time when the likes of Argentina, Chile, and Costa Rica have themselves struggled to accommodate rising migration from poorer countries. **Widespread frustration over organized crime throughout the hemisphere, as well as social changes such as the spread of evangelical Christianity, mean that right-wing leaders may be favored to win upcoming elections** in Chile in 2025 and Brazil and Colombia in 2026. **It is entirely possible to imagine Trump working with a broad array of like-minded governments in the region to address security and other shared challenges.**

## U.S. is engaging in Latin America now -- science and technology Lazarus 2024

Leland, Associate Director, National Security Policy, Brookings: A Response, 9/25,

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-are-the-united-states-and-china-intersecting-in-latin-america/>

One key thread in all four essays is that the United States shouldn’t revert back to a cold-war-style approach to PRC-Latin America relations. Wirtschafter and Piccone rightly point out that such **a confrontational approach will backfire.** Evan Ellis avers that the United States shouldn’t attempt to “block” Latin American countries from engaging in legitimate business with the PRC, and instead offer viable alternatives. **The good news is U.S. policymakers are listening and acting. In early September, the State Department hosted the Americas Partnership Semiconductor Symposium,** bringing together Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, and the Dominican Republic to expand semiconductor assembly, testing, and packaging. **The U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) has invested more than \$11 billion in projects across the Western Hemisphere,** such as loans to [Honduran small businesses](#), funding for Brazil to cleanly [extract critical minerals](#), and risk insurance to help Ecuador [conserve the Galapagos](#) Islands. The DFC has also partnered with the [Inter-American Development Bank](#) and the [U.S. Agency for International Development](#) to jointly finance projects and is actively encouraging more U.S. private sector engagement.

## **Trump has re-engaged Latin America properly in his 2nd term beyond just rhetoric Spektor 2025**

Matias, Professor, Fundacao Getulio Vargas (Sao Paolo), Foreign Affairs, 4/1, The Limits of Trump's Hardball Diplomacy <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/limits-trumps-hardball-diplomacy>

No great power sustained as dominant a position over its neighboring region as the United States did during most of the twentieth century. **But in recent decades, Washington has largely disregarded its neighbors. Since a free trade agreement with Canada and Mexico and a military initiative to help Colombia combat drug cartels were negotiated more than 25 years ago, United States policy in the Americas has consisted mostly of failed measures to stem flows of migrants and drugs across U.S. borders. This neglect has opened the door for China and Russia to exert increasing influence across the Western Hemisphere. Since the beginning of his political career, U.S. President Donald Trump has signaled his intention to reassert U.S. dominance in the region. He hopes to resist China and Russia's growing diplomatic, economic, and military engagement** with countries that have traditionally been within the United States' sphere of influence, and doing so while delivering on issues important to his base, including securing favorable trade terms and stopping flows of both migrants and fentanyl. During Trump's first administration, these goals were largely aspirational. He and his officials frequently invoked the Monroe Doctrine, the 1823 declaration asserting exclusive U.S. influence in the Western Hemisphere, when they opposed Russian military cooperation with Latin American countries, say, or framed Chinese economic expansion in the region as a security threat. Rex Tillerson, Trump's first secretary of state, called the doctrine "as relevant today as when it was written." Ultimately, these appeals amounted mostly to rhetorical posturing and, because of policy inconsistencies and incompetence, effected little concrete change. **In his second term, however, Trump is accompanying radical rhetoric about regional hegemony with real action.** In a matter of weeks, he has discarded any pretense of transactional diplomacy and adopted a predatory approach. Taken aback by the thrust and speed of his initiatives, **many countries have bent the knee.** Consider Panama, one of the countries in the Western Hemisphere that has historically been most supportive of the United States. **In response to Trump's threats of reclaiming the Panama Canal,** which the United States controlled for much of the twentieth century, **it immediately withdrew from China's Belt and Road Initiative,** resulting in the cancellation of several planned infrastructure projects. This represented a major blow to Beijing's ambitious port diplomacy in the region. **Panama also waived fees for U.S. Navy vessels and granted them priority passage through the canal, a significant concession.** And U.S. pressure prompted a Hong Kong-based company to sell its ports at both ends of the canal to a consortium led by the American investment firm BlackRock, a move cast by the Trump administration as a strategic victory. **Mexico has faced the prospect of 25 percent tariffs and** a U.S. designation of several Mexican-based cartels as foreign terrorist organizations—a branding that would allow the United States to launch **cross-border military operations** against those groups. **It secured a temporary reprieve by deploying 10,000 of its national guard troops to the border** and allowing U.S. marines to enter the country and train Mexican special forces. Trump proceeded with the terrorist designations anyway and continues to threaten Mexico with tariffs. **El Salvador, for its part, agreed to take in migrants of any nationality who are deported from the United States** in exchange for an extension of temporary protected status for Salvadorans already in the United States.

**China won, already durable partnerships in Latin America.****Spektor 2025**

Matias, Professor, Fundacao Getulio Vargas (Sao Paolo), Foreign Affairs, 4/1, The Limits of Trump's Hardball Diplomacy <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/limits-trumps-hardball-diplomacy>

**China has made widespread and durable inroads in Latin America to secure reliable supplies of energy, minerals, and various food products;** identify targets for Chinese investment, such as hydroelectric dams in Ecuador and railway projects in Argentina; **cultivate diplomatic support from the Latin America caucus in the United Nations; and gain leverage over the United States** by showing that it can operate in Washington's traditional sphere of influence. Today, **China has displaced the United States as the primary trading partner for several major economies and persuaded most countries in the region to break off formal ties with Taiwan.** Nascent **programs for Chinese cooperation with police and military forces in Latin America have laid the groundwork for expanded security relationships. Crucially, China has achieved these pragmatic gains through diplomacy** and without directly confronting the United States. Moscow has pursued a narrower strategy focused on security relationships. Russia has built military ties with Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, providing these states with weapons systems, military training, and intelligence support. It has also launched disinformation campaigns that exploit and inflame grievances with the United States. Although Russia's presence in the region is less visible than China's, its influence operations continue to frustrate the United States, and at little cost to the Kremlin. Consensus is growing in Washington about the seriousness of these threats, as evidenced by bipartisan congressional statements and Pentagon assessments. General Laura Richardson, the commander of U.S. Southern Command from 2021 to 2024, recently warned that **China is "playing chess" in the Western Hemisphere while the United States is "playing checkers"**—a reference to the success of Beijing's patient and holistic approach to the region.

## Aff Link Debate:

**Kerry says the US can focus on multiple issues without losing DC****Global Post 2013**

6/29/13, by Charles M. Sennott and Philip S. Balboni. "Kerry, on Mideast tour, to confront doubts in Asia", <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130629/kerry-mideast-tour-confront-doubts-asia>

**Secretary of State John Kerry heads to talks in Asia** trying to quash fears that the vaunted US refocus on the region is not serious as he puts a personal priority on peace in the Middle East.¶ Kerry plans to attend Southeast Asian talks in Brunei from Monday, which has become his unofficial deadline to wrap up his latest Middle East trip in which he is shuttling between Israeli and Palestinian leaders to revive peace talks.¶ Even in Brunei, **his focus will not be solely on Asia as he is expected to meet Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov** on tensions over the Syria war and the mysterious presence in Moscow of US intelligence leaker Edward Snowden.¶ Kerry has visited the Middle East five times in as many months. His second trip to Asia since taking office in February -- he earlier went to China, Japan and South Korea -- is again part of a larger tour.¶ Kerry dismissed suggestions he was uninterested in Asia, saying that he planned to travel "shortly" to Indonesia and Vietnam and believed in President Barack Obama's so-called "pivot" of putting more of a focus on Asia.¶ Kerry said that **the United States has always been capable of "dealing with more than one crisis in more than one part of the planet at the same time".¶ "People should not think that, because we are trying to bring peace to an area** that has been struggling for 30 years now under the yoke of conflict and dissension, that **that means we can't also pay attention to these other issues."** Kerry told Voice of America during his latest trip.¶ Diplomats and some analysts have voiced concern that the United States is shifting back to older priorities after the departure of Kerry's predecessor Hillary Clinton, who prided herself on paying attention to Asia.¶ Clinton sought to develop a broader relationship with a rising China and spearheaded US outreach to Myanmar, which has surprised even many critics by embracing democratic reforms in the past three years.¶ Clinton was the first secretary of state to visit all 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, with her aides arguing that the previous administration of George W. Bush neglected the economically dynamic and mostly US-friendly bloc due to preoccupation with the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.¶ A senior US official acknowledged that Asian nations voiced doubts about the Asia commitment as Clinton left. But he said that **at a substantive rather than symbolic level, the United States is stepping up spending on its Asia projects at a time of belt-tightening.**¶

## Aff Impact Debate:

### China Defense

#### China sphere of influence is overrated

##### Vila-Moreno 2023

Miquel, 3-29, Executive Director, Catalonia Global Institute, World Politics Review, The US is overstating China's Influence in Latin America,

<https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/china-latin-america-investment-south-america-relations-trade/?share=email&messages%5B0%5D=one-time-read-limit-returning&email=jddtfl%40yahoo.com>

In recent years, Beijing has established a strong foothold in the region, causing anxiety in Washington about China's desire to blunt U.S. influence there. These fears have intensified amid the recent resurgence of left-wing and nationalist governments, particularly in South America. China's demand for Latin American commodities and the region's demand for Chinese consumer goods are the pillars of this relationship, which is reinforced by shared distrust of the U.S. and a mutual interest in rewriting the rules of the international system. But **although Beijing has made**

**considerable gains in the region at Washington's expense, claims about China's influence there might be overstated.** Over the past two decades, **China has cemented its status as**

**the largest trading partner** for the region's heavyweights like Brazil, Chile and Argentina. In addition, trade between China and Latin America reached an all-time high of [\\$450 billion in 2021](#), making it the region's second-largest trading partner, behind the U.S., and South America's top trading partner. Last year, too, one estimate suggested that [China allocated](#) nearly \$10 billion toward investment in the region—including through offshore financial centers—more than what it directs to the considerably larger economies of the U.S. and European Union. That would make China the third-largest source of foreign direct investment for Latin America, and second in terms of mergers and acquisitions. The majority of China's investments in Latin America are concentrated in energy, mining and infrastructure. More recently, the growth of the electric vehicle industry and increased demand for lithium has factored into Beijing's calculations in the region as well. Chinese companies now dominate the mining sector in the

"lithium triangle" countries of Argentina, Bolivia and Chile, for instance. Although **China's power-projection capabilities**

**pale in comparison to the U.S.**, Beijing is a crucial partner for Washington's adversaries in the region. China is Venezuela's main benefactor, with Caracas now the [leading importer](#) of Chinese arms in Latin America, and Beijing is [deepening cooperation](#) with Cuba as part of the Belt and Road Initiative. Until the early 2000s, the Monroe Doctrine was a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy for over 200 years, premised on Washington's preeminence as the undisputed hegemon in the Western Hemisphere. Viewed through that prism, China's growing influence in Latin America poses a threat to the United States' interests, especially given the number of governments that oppose Washington's dominance in the region.

But **despite inroads Beijing has made in Latin America, it cannot be said to have displaced**

**Washington there.** Chinese engagement in Latin America has yielded some political dividends. In the past decade, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Panama and Nicaragua have switched their diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing; just two weeks ago, [Honduras followed suit](#). And at the United Nations, Latin American countries have cast votes on a range of issues that have proved valuable to Chinese interests, including a failed effort at the Human Rights Council to open a debate on allegations of human rights abuses in Xinjiang. Bolivia, Cuba and Venezuela voted with China, while Argentina, Brazil and Mexico abstained. Moreover, the resurgence of the left, particularly in South America, could play into China's hands, given the Latin American left's historical animosity toward Washington. The [return to office](#) of Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, for instance, will undoubtedly boost efforts to counter U.S. influence in the region. During his previous stint in office from 2003 to 2010, Lula [demonstrated](#) a preference for close ties with China and worked to revitalize South-South relations in forums like BRICS, an informal grouping of countries that includes Brazil as well as Russia, India, China and South Africa. While Latin American countries today are profoundly polarized, that polarization does not necessarily map onto a preference for either China or the United States. But close ties to China, in Brazil and elsewhere, go beyond ideological alignments, even in the case of countries like Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia. Economic realities across the region mean that changes in government are unlikely to affect trade and commercial relations with China. Indeed, in Uruguay, right-wing President Luis Lacalle Pou is currently negotiating a [free-trade deal with China](#). Similarly, Lula's predecessor, former far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, used "tough on China" rhetoric as a candidate during the 2018 election campaign, but once in office, he did nothing to hamper trade with China. Brazilian demand for Chinese goods, services and investments, continued unabated for the four years he was in office. In 2021, Brazil received nearly [\\$6 billion in foreign direct investments from China](#), while BYD, a Chinese automobile manufacturer, [announced plans](#) to open three factories in the country, with a total investment of \$565 million. In addition to China's imports of commodities and exports of affordable manufactured products to Latin American consumers, it is also opening factories and providing other services that will deepen bilateral relations between Beijing and Latin American governments. In recent years, this engagement has also broadened to involve local authorities and the private sector. This has given way to a deeply

entrenched Chinese presence in the region that is more resistant to political fluctuations. Nevertheless, **there is little evidence of an**

**inclination in Latin America toward embracing the so-called Beijing Consensus or accepting China's aspiration toward a global leadership role.** For instance, **opinion**

**surveys** conducted in 2021 [in Mexico and Brazil](#) **show that most respondents regard U.S. global leadership as better for their country than China's. The U.S. is a top destination for**

**migrants** from Central and South America, and China will likely be unable to recreate the broad links those communities build. And **Chinese culture and language will be hard-pressed to compete with U.S. soft power and cultural hegemony in the region.**

## China Offense

**Turn: Trump's Latin America policy is aggressive and will only make Latin America turn towards China further**

**Feinberg, Brookings Institution, 2017**

Richard, Professor, School of Global Policy and Strategy, UC San Diego, Former Brookings Fellow, What Trump's America First Means for Latin America,

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/what-trumps-america-first-means-for-latin-america/>

**Smart great powers ensure their safety by befriending smaller neighboring countries.**

China is engaged in a high-profile charm offensive to overcome long-standing animosities and draw its Southeast Asian neighbors into its orbit, through trade agreements and massive infrastructure projects. The Russia of Vladimir Putin is working hard to regain influence in territories of the former Soviet Union, throughout Europe and Central Asia. **But U.S. President Donald**

**Trump's vision of a resurgent America apparently excludes some of our closest**

**neighbors. Instead of erecting bridges, he seems intent on erecting walls**—not only against

Mexico, but now against Cuba, Puerto Rico and possibly Central America as well. Historically, **peace on our southern**

**and northern borders has made it easier for the United States to expand its global reach.**

**For if leaders are preoccupied with unstable, hostile neighbors, it is that much harder for them to focus attention and resources on engaging overseas.** President Franklin D. Roosevelt, as one

example, sought to foster comity in our hemisphere. As he prepared for global warfare against fascism in Europe and Asia, FDR understood well the critical importance of good neighbors. He systemically withdrew U.S. occupation forces from the Caribbean Basin where they had overstayed their welcome. Thanks to FDR's strategic foresight, when global war finally came the Western Hemisphere presented a united front (absent Argentina) against distant enemies. By contrast, Trump began his presidential campaign by denouncing Mexico as a source of criminals and racists allegedly terrorizing U.S. citizens. The proposed solutions: massive deportations and a tall, impenetrable concrete wall stretching all along our southern frontier. Trump then asserted that the NAFTA trade accord with Mexico was robbing American jobs. As president, he promised to rip up "the worst trade deal ever."

**Rather than making America great again, Trump's postures against our near abroad**

**threaten to damage our national interests.** In fact, NAFTA has been the foundation for the U.S. and Mexico to overcome

historical distrust and negotiate a remarkably broad range of constructive deals, from water and environmental protection to law enforcement, anti-money laundering and anti-terrorism. Trump's recent attacks on Cuba are similarly self-damaging. Since the Cuban revolution in the early 1960s, Cuba had been a thorn in American diplomacy. While the island was stable—in the way autocratic regimes appear to be, until they are not—Cuba's capable diplomats systematically strove to counter U.S. interests worldwide. Under the Obama administration, two short years of bilateral détente yielded an impressive series of deals with the Cuban government, on counternarcotics, orderly immigration, and protecting the oceans against oil spills and other environmental threats. As a result, our Caribbean shores became more secure. Overall, our hemispheric relations had rarely been stronger. The Trump White House has since leveraged a mysterious illness affecting U.S. diplomats stationed in Havana to order crippling personnel reductions in the respective embassies. An unwarranted travel advisory – Cuba is a low-crime destination – targets the fastest growing sector of the Cuban economy. As a result, Cuba will be less likely to cooperate on economic and environmental issues of vital importance to U.S. communities that border the Caribbean. Ominously, a less prosperous, less stable Cuba could also ignite a major immigration crisis. Trump's flaccid response to the devastation in Puerto Rico caused by Hurricane Maria follows the same pattern of disregard for our neighbors. The slow response may be due in part to the island's ambiguous political status: a commonwealth that is part of the United States, Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens but lack voting representatives in the U.S. Congress or in the Electoral College. Publicly, Trump blamed the slow recovery on residents, who "want everything to be done for them when it should be a community effort." Such callous comments carry a subtext: Latins are lazy and irresponsible; the solution is not more federal assistance but moral regeneration. Many Puerto Ricans—whether living on the island or on the continental United States—expressed their astonishment and outrage at these presidential affronts. These are not the only examples of a Latin America policy that could damage U.S. national interests. The administration is also reportedly planning to expel hundreds of thousands of Central American immigrants who fled bloody violence in their homelands. Such a massive deportation would place severe pressures on the already weak economies, exacerbate violence and trafficking, and possibly destabilize their fragile democracies. Why such counterproductive measures that harm our neighbors' economies, threaten their social fabrics, and alienate their diplomats? Perhaps administration officials, driven by domestic politics, have not carefully considered the geopolitical consequences of their proposals. But it is more likely a question of worldview. Building walls, massive deportations, commercial disruption, and harsh rhetoric fit within the Trump-ian vision of America First: a predominantly white homeland, with fewer Latins, that protects its borders through military might, not good neighbors. Our geopolitical competitors must be confounded—and intrigued—by Washington's own dismemberment of a strategic asset. We shall see

how nations such as **China, Russia and Venezuela, and the unseen forces of global chaos, take advantage of the U.S.'s unforced errors in its hemisphere.**

## Defense: AI

**Predictions of Killer AI all are drawn from Nick Bostrom, who is a quack Etzioni 2016**

Oren, CEO, Allen Institute for Artificial Intelligence, and Professor of Computer Science at University of Washington, Sept. 20th, MIT Technology Review, No, The Experts Don't Think Superintelligent AI is a threat to Humanity,

<https://www.technologyreview.com/2016/09/20/70131/no-the-experts-dont-think-superintelligent-ai-is-a-threat-to-humanity/>

**If you believe everything you read, you are probably quite worried about the prospect of a superintelligent, killer AI.** The Guardian, a British newspaper, **warned** recently that “we’re like children playing with a bomb,” and a recent Newsweek headline reads, “Artificial Intelligence Is Coming, and It Could Wipe Us Out.” **Numerous such headlines**, fueled by comments from the likes of Elon Musk and Stephen Hawking, **are strongly influenced by the work of one man: professor Nick Bostrom**, author of the philosophical treatise [Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, and Strategies](#). Bostrom is an Oxford philosopher, but quantitative assessment of risks is the province of actuarial science. He may be dubbed the world’s first prominent “actuarial philosopher,” though the term seems an oxymoron given that philosophy is an arena for conceptual arguments, and risk assessment is a data-driven statistical exercise. So what do the data say? **Bostrom aggregates the results of four different surveys** of groups such as participants in a conference called “Philosophy and Theory of AI,” held **in 2011 in Thessaloniki, Greece**, and members of the Greek Association for Artificial Intelligence (he does not provide response rates or the phrasing of questions, and **he does not account for the reliance on data collected in Greece**). His findings are presented as probabilities that human-level AI will be attained by a certain time: By 2022: 10 percent. By 2040: 50 percent. By 2075: 90 percent. This aggregate of four surveys is the main source of data on the advent of human-level intelligence in over 300 pages of philosophical arguments, fables, and metaphors. **To get a more accurate assessment of the opinion of leading researchers in the field**, I turned to **the Fellows of the American Association for Artificial Intelligence, a group of researchers who are recognized as having made significant, sustained contributions to the field.** In early March 2016, AAI sent out an anonymous survey on my behalf, posing the following question to 193 fellows: “In his book, Nick Bostrom has defined Superintelligence as ‘an intellect that is much smarter than the best human brains in practically every field, including scientific creativity, general wisdom and social skills.’ When do you think we will achieve Superintelligence?” Over the next week or so, **80 fellows responded** (a 41 percent response rate), and their responses are summarized below: In essence, **according to 92.5 percent of the respondents, superintelligence is beyond the foreseeable horizon.** This interpretation is also supported by written comments shared by the fellows. Even though the survey was anonymous, 44 fellows chose to identify themselves, including Geoff Hinton (deep-learning luminary), Ed Feigenbaum (Stanford, Turing Award winner), Rodney Brooks (leading roboticist), and Peter Norvig (Google). The respondents also shared several comments, including the following: “Way, way, way more than 25 years. Centuries most likely. But not never.” “We’re competing with millions of years’ evolution of the human brain. We can write single-purpose programs that can compete with humans, and sometimes excel, but the world is not neatly compartmentalized into single-problem questions.” **“Nick Bostrom is a professional scare**

**monger. His Institute's role is to find existential threats to humanity. He sees them everywhere. I am tempted to refer to him as the 'Donald Trump' of AI.** Surveys do, of course, have limited scientific value. They are notoriously sensitive to question phrasing, selection of respondents, etc. However, it is the one source of data that Bostrom himself turned to. Another methodology would be to extrapolate from the current state of AI to the future. However, this is difficult because we do not have a quantitative measurement of the current state of human-level intelligence. We have achieved superintelligence in board games like chess and Go (see "[Google's AI Masters Go a Decade Earlier than Expected](#)"), and yet our programs failed to score above 60 percent on eighth grade science tests, as the Allen Institute's research has shown (see "[The Best AI Program Still Flunks an Eighth Grade Science Test](#)"), or above 48 percent in disambiguating simple sentences (see "[Tougher Turing Test Exposes Chatbots' Stupidity](#)"). There are many valid concerns about AI, from its impact on jobs to its uses in autonomous weapons systems and even to the potential risk of superintelligence. However, predictions that superintelligence is on the foreseeable horizon are not supported by the available data. **Moreover, doom-and-gloom predictions often fail to consider the potential benefits of AI in preventing medical errors, reducing car accidents, and more.**

**AI won't and can't do all of the things the aff is promising. Multiple reasons: cost, technology limits, data limits. The fundamental model for AI is probability-driven, not actual intelligence, and it's been massively overhyped by a tech industry desperate for the next big thing.**

**Zitron 2024**

Ed Zitron, CEO of EZPR and author, "Pop Culture" Where's Your Ed At? July 8, 2024.

<https://www.wheresyoured.at/pop-culture/>

Yet, I have a counterpoint: no it doesn't. Seriously, Mira Murati, CTO of OpenAI, said a few weeks ago that the models it has in its labs are not much more advanced than those that are publicly-available. That's my answer to all of this. **There is no magic**

**trick. There is no** secret thing that Sam Altman is going to reveal to us in a few months that makes me eat crow, or some

**magical tool that Microsoft or Google "pops out"** that makes all of this worth it. There isn't. I'm telling you

there isn't. **Generative AI**, as I said back in March, **is peaking**, if it hasn't already peaked. **It cannot do much**

**more than it is currently doing, other than doing more of it faster with some new inputs.** It

isn't getting much more efficient. Sequoia hype-man David Cahn gleefully mentioned in a recent blog that Nvidia's B100 will "have 2.5x better performance for only 25% more cost," which doesn't mean a goddamn thing, because generative AI isn't going to gain sentience or intelligence and consciousness because it's able to run faster. Generative AI is not going to become AGI, nor will it become the kind of artificial intelligence you've seen in science fiction. Ultra-smart assistants like Jarvis from Iron Man would require a form of consciousness that no technology currently — or may ever — have — which is the ability to both process and understand information flawlessly and make decisions based on experience, which, if I haven't been clear enough, are all entirely distinct things.

**Generative AI at best processes information when it trains on data, but at no point does it**

**"learn" or "understand."** because everything it's doing is based on ingesting training data and developing answers

based on a mathematical sense or probability rather than any appreciation or comprehension of the material itself. LLMs are entirely

different pieces of technology to that of "an artificial intelligence" in the sense that the AI bubble is hyping, and it's disgraceful that

the AI industry has taken so much money and attention with such a flagrant, offensive lie. The jobs market isn't going to change

because of generative AI, because generative AI can't actually do many jobs, and it's mediocre at the few things that it's capable of

doing. While it's a useful efficiency tool, said efficiency is based off of a technology that is extremely expensive, and I believe that at

some point AI companies like Anthropic and OpenAI will have to increase prices — or begin to collapse under the weight of a

technology that has no path to profitability. If there were some secret way that this would all get fixed, wouldn't Microsoft, or Meta, or

Google, or Amazon — whose CEO of AWS compared the generative AI hype to the Dotcom bubble in February — have taken

advantage of it? And why am I hearing that OpenAI is already trying to raise another multi-billion dollar round after raising an

indeterminate amount at an \$80 billion valuation in February? Isn't its annualized revenue \$3.4 billion? Why does it need more

money? I'll give you an educated guess: because whatever they — and other generative AI hucksters — have today is obviously,

painfully not the future. Generative AI is not the future, but a regurgitation of the past, a useful-yet-not-groundbreaking way to quickly

generate "new" data from old that costs far too much to make the compute and energy demands worth it. Google grew its emissions

by 48% in the last five years chasing a technology that made its search engine even worse than it already is, with little to show for it.

**It's genuinely remarkable how many people have been won over by this remarkable con**

**— this unscrupulous manipulation of capital markets, the media and brainless executives**

**disconnected from production — all thanks to a tech industry that's disconnected itself**

**from building useful technology.**

## Economy Defense

**Trump's tariffs make economic instability inevitable****Martin 2025**

Nik, Reporter, Reuters, 4/8, Trump's tariffs trigger recession alarm,

<https://www.dw.com/en/us-economy-trump-tariffs-recession-inflation-trade/a-72158605>

**The rout on global financial markets continued for a third day on Monday (April 7) in reaction to US President Donald Trump's unprecedented tariffs on most trading partners of the United States. Investors are growing increasingly nervous about the prospect of a wider trade war, which would likely spark a global recession. They say the tariffs are poised to have far-reaching effects on world economic growth, due to much higher manufacturing costs, falling business confidence, market volatility and supply chain**

**disruptions.** Although the US stock markets regained some lost ground on Monday, Trump may have exacerbated further declines in Asia and Europe at the start of the week by saying that investors would have to deal with the market sell-off for now. "Sometimes you have to take medicine to fix something," Trump told reporters aboard AirForce One on Sunday evening. Could the global economy fall into recession? JP Morgan said last week it believes the odds of a global recession are now at 60% by the end of the year, compared to 40% before Trump's vast array of tariffs was announced. Deutsche Bank warned in a research note Monday that as Trump doubles down, the [new tariffs](#) would have "immense global implications for 2025 and the years and decades ahead." Asia was hit much harder than Europe with levies of more than 40% on some key countries, prompting the likes of [Vietnam](#), [Taiwan](#) and [Indonesia](#) on Sunday to seek new trade deals with Washington. [China](#) is so far the only major economy to order retaliatory tariffs on US imports following last Wednesday's announcement. Beijing ordered [extra levies of 34% on American goods](#) and put export curbs on some rare earths — vital raw materials needed to produce new tech and clean energy products. Those tariffs are due to take effect this Thursday. Having hit China with an additional 34% tariff last week, Trump doubled down on Monday, threatening an additional 50% tariff if Beijing doesn't withdraw its latest tariff increase. [India](#), which now faces a 26% levy on exports to the US, does not plan to retaliate against Trump's tariffs, Reuters news agency reported Sunday, citing an unnamed Indian official. New Delhi has been quick to cut some tariffs on US imports. India was one of the first countries to seek a new trade deal with Washington, during a visit to the White House by Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) in February. Imports from the [European Union](#) to the US face levies of 20% starting Wednesday. EU finance ministers [met in Luxembourg](#) on Monday to agree on around €26 billion (\$28.46 billion) of new levies in response to Trump's earlier 25% tariffs on aluminum and steel. [Ursula von der Leyen](#), president of the [European Commission](#), the bloc's executive arm, said Sunday that Brussels was prepared to "defend its interests with proportionate countermeasures." But she also signaled the EU's "commitment to engaging in negotiations with the US." ABN Amro, one of the largest Dutch banks, last week halved its economic outlook for EU member states, saying it expects the bloc's quarterly growth to "hover around zero, with a high chance of a negative quarter." Some positive news did emerge on Sunday when two Trump advisers told US media that [more than 50 countries](#) had been in touch to seek new trade deals with Washington. Paul Ashworth from Capital Economics said that despite the US president's defiant rhetoric, Trump would soon realize that he'd gone too far. "The most likely next step is that Trump will quickly announce a few 'deals' that reduce the prohibitive reciprocal tariffs rates on some of the hardest hit countries," Ashworth wrote in a research note, adding that China "may be the exception." JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon, meanwhile, wrote in an annual letter to shareholders that "the quicker this issue is resolved, the better because some of the negative effects increase cumulatively over time and would be hard to reverse." What about the US economy? [The US economy](#) has averaged nearly 3% growth since the end of the COVID-19 pandemic but now **faces** what research house Morningstar called **a "self-inflicted economic catastrophe" as a result of Trump's tariffs. S&P Global raised its probability of a US recession** to between 30% and 35%, up from 25% in March. Goldman Sachs, meanwhile, increased the chances of a US recession in the next year to 45%, while Barclays and UBS also warned that the US economy may contract in the next few months. Steve Cochrane, chief Asia-Pacific economist at Moody's Analytics warned Monday that the US could fall into recession "very quickly" and that it could be "rather lengthy." Capital Economics, meanwhile, warned that if Trump is unwilling to make deals with US trade partners, the stock market rout would soon be followed by a "collapse in household and business confidence." The UK-based economic research house warned that US inflation could rise above 5% and that the recession would worsen if the US Congress "fails to pass timely fiscal stimulus because of Republican infighting." [US Federal Reserve](#) boss Jerome Powell last week warned the **tariffs would likely cause US inflation to rise and growth to slow. He also mentioned an "elevated" risk of higher unemployment.**

## Generic Offense:

**Trump's attempts to engage Latin America will backfire****Winter 2024**

Brian, Editor, Washington Quarterly, 12/10, Foreign Affairs, Latin America Is About to Become a Priority for US Foreign Policy, [https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/latin-america-about-become-priority-us-foreign-policy?utm\\_medium=promo\\_email&utm\\_source=fa\\_edit&utm\\_campaign=post\\_release\\_trump\\_jf25\\_actives&utm\\_content=20250115&utm\\_term=all-actives](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/latin-america-about-become-priority-us-foreign-policy?utm_medium=promo_email&utm_source=fa_edit&utm_campaign=post_release_trump_jf25_actives&utm_content=20250115&utm_term=all-actives)

**But especially in the short term, Trump's policies toward the region are likely to be highly disruptive—and could risk pushing key Latin American countries further away from**

**Washington** rather than reversing the drift of recent years. Mexico faces the biggest challenges, including the possibility of

severe damage to trade with the United States, the destination of more than 80 percent of its exports, unless it meets Trump's demands to help secure the countries' 2,000-mile shared border. Trump's recent threats to implement a 25 percent tariff on Mexico upon taking office were only the start of a protracted and tense negotiation that no one should assume is a bluff. Indeed, Mexico is not alone. Other **countries, stretching from Guatemala to Colombia, will also face tariffs or**

**other sanctions unless they are seen to be halting the northward flow of migrants**

**through the Darién Gap** and other key transit points and taking back citizens swept up in Trump's promised mass deportations. A second Trump administration will try to pressure Latin American governments including Brazil, Panama, and Peru to stop accepting Chinese investment for sensitive projects such as ports, electric grids, and 5G telecommunications networks.

**Many Republicans perceive these linkages, and the growing Chinese presence in Latin America more broadly, as unacceptable violations of the Monroe Doctrine, the**

**201-year-old edict that the Western Hemisphere should be free of interference from**

**outside powers**, an idea that has enjoyed a certain revival among Republicans in today's era of heightened great-power competition. Whether Trump's policies toward the region result in a widespread backlash, a series of quiet accommodations, or an era of stronger U.S.-Latin American ties will depend on several factors. Some of them, such as the crises driving record migration in recent years from several countries across the region, will be largely beyond the president-elect's control. The biggest question, some Republican officials say, is whether [Trump](#) comes to see Latin America as not just a source of the United States' biggest problems but also a potential solution to them.

**Coercion isn't strategy, it backfires****Spektor 2025**

Matias, Professor, Fundacao Getulio Vargas (Sao Paolo), Foreign Affairs, 4/1, The Limits of Trump's Hardball Diplomacy <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/limits-trumps-hardball-diplomacy>

These initial successes may support the perception that Trump is building up U.S. authority across the Western Hemisphere. But **extracting a series of concessions from weaker neighbors is not an effective strategy in**

**the long term, because it doesn't take into account rapidly shifting regional dynamics**

**that the United States is unwittingly accelerating with its belligerent behavior. Many**

**countries in the Western Hemisphere are shrewdly hedging their bets—neither turning away from the United States completely nor closing themselves off to U.S. competitors.**

China, in particular, has made significant inroads in Latin America, where it is often seen as a reliable source of the kinds of investment and diplomatic engagement that the United States no longer consistently provides. **Trump's threats and**

**intimidation tactics cannot provide a stable foundation for long-term U.S. primacy in the**

**region.** For a president who prides himself on "the art of the deal," he has, in Latin America, made significant demands while offering few benefits in return. Far from rejecting transactional diplomacy, regional leaders crave genuine give-and-take relationships in which their priorities receive consideration. **If the United States wants to counter China's influence, it**

**must offer tangible alternatives that address local concerns.** The U.S. demander in chief must learn

that real deals are predicated on mutual advantage. **He must position the United States as a source of opportunity rather than one merely of pressure.**

## **Approaching Latin America as a space for US-China competition is bad Piccone 2024**

Ted, Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy, Brookings, : A Response: 9/25,

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-are-the-united-states-and-china-intersecting-in-latin-america/>

**The tougher question is whether to view the region principally as a theater for the overarching U.S.-China competition or as a critical zone of vital U.S. interests** deserving of much greater attention and resources from Washington **regardless of the China threat. History tells us that when U.S. policymakers and politics look at the region mainly from a global threat perspective, more friction than cooperation erupts.** When we see the hemisphere as a collection of troubled but mostly friendly democratizing societies, we get better results, ranging from President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy to President Bill Clinton's Summit of the Americas. The current debate between a revival of the Monroe Doctrine advanced by some conservatives and a more nuanced "root causes" strategy taken by the Biden-Harris administration reveals the ongoing tension between these two approaches. Unfortunately, the relatively benign environment of the 1990s has eroded due to an alarming conjunction of malign forces in the region—rising organized crime and very high levels of violence; entrenched autocracies in Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba; weak governing institutions and rule of law; and anemic economic performance and high inequality. China, unfortunately, tends to be aligned on the wrong side of most of these issues. Even in the area of trade and investment, China's behavior leans toward predatory practices, lack of transparency, and a short leash from the Chinese Communist Party's levers of power and influence. China's ramped-up information operations in the region further underscore the concerns all four of us have for a more troubling constellation of threats. **Given official Washington's traditional neglect of the region, a more realistic approach, and one that would garner some bipartisan support, would be to use the China card at home as an argument for a long overdue intensification of U.S. investment and outreach across the board.** The key elements of a robust strategy toward the region would include expanded nearshoring opportunities, judicial and law enforcement cooperation, science and technology upgrades, renewable energy and climate change mitigation and adaptation, and education and cultural exchanges. **Abroad, the message would lead with a frame of good neighbors working together to solve common challenges.**