



# *Editorial*

POLITICAL ANALYSIS AND CORPORATE SECURITY UNIT

## ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

### **GLOBAL**

International cooperation against  
the African debacle:  
the first world challengeo

### **REGIONAL**

Hydrocarbon crisis in Latin  
America: the social outbreak  
towards a new north

### **LOCAL**

Peacebuilding and security:  
The diffuse bet of the new  
government



## International cooperation against the African debacle: the first world challenge

The African region will comprise, in a very high probability, the densest mercantile territorial center of the future, given its rapid and effective population growth (*La vanguardia*, 2019), which, in adherence with the titular award, according to the International Development Institute Sustainable, being the continent with the greatest mineral wealth in the world (containing a third of the planet's total reserves), and possessing 24% of the arable land available (*La vanguardia*, 2019), makes it, at the intuitive comprehension of common sense, in an objective destiny of the great nations for their support, intervention and financing.

Nevertheless, Even if that statement turns out to be true, far from giving a due correspondence for the correct use of these resources for the addressed of the development of Africa (which in the long term would lead to a reciprocity between the nations that make up the territory and the investing nations for the economic interdependence), those who ultimately end up benefiting to a greater extent from the contributions aimed at improving the conditions of the continent are multinationals, local elites, anti-democratic regimes and warlords (*Bejarano*, 2021). Faced with the refusal of a simple resolution, the agreed western international community, headed by the powerful nations of the first world, seems far from wanting to assume the responsibility of immersion required for the solution of the problem, because apart from not representing a priority task to nowadays, it is, due to the extensive requirement of efforts and resources that it merits, very expensive (*Mises Wire*, 2019).

The war in Ukraine is today, to the testimony of the dense media complex, the target on which the world must focus its attention. Far from being understood as the only problem on a global scale that is capable of simultaneously

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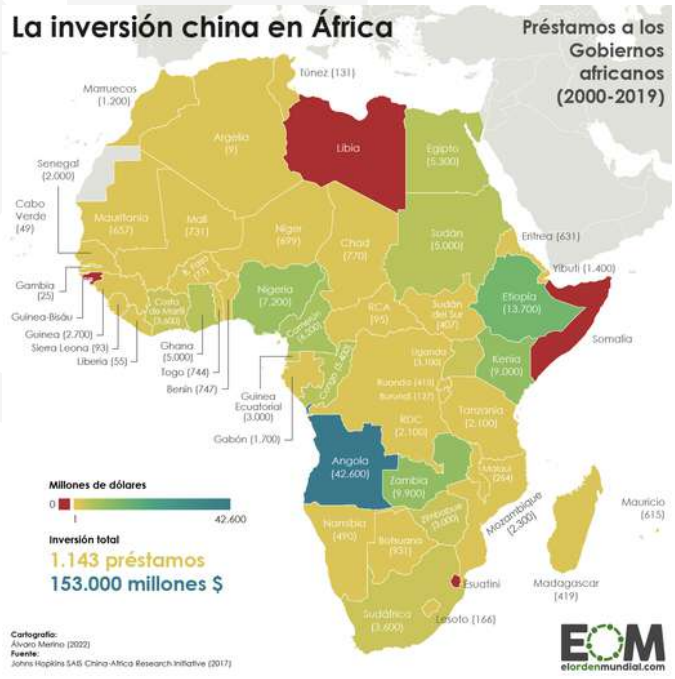
hitting an immense multiplicity of nations, the confrontational symbolism of the Western world against the otherness of the Eastern world ends up being the main motivator of an attentional turning of the international community (BBC , 2022). For this reason, although the indirect effects of this geopolitical conflict have clear effects on the export of cereals, vegetable oils, and pesticides to the African continent (Expansión, 2022), in the shadow of a worrying food crisis, there is a lag in the neglect of financing projects, democratization and, generally, stabilization by the first world nations (El Orden Mundial , 2020).

Even though the turn of the tables seems to be an exceptional convenience in the current situation, the relegation of Africa as a non-priority on the Western agenda goes back decades. Ignoring the millenary historical segregationist that arose from the Eurocentric dynamics of foreign cultural invisibility, since Africa ceased to have geopolitical relevance in the framework of the cold war for the advantage against the Soviets, the alliances without prerequisites of democratic consolidation from North to South lost their strategic value (Gonzalez, 2005).

Faced with the resounding US abandonment of the region by declaring itself the victorious hegemon of the cold war, the growing People's Republic of China did not miss the window of opportunity, even with the constant contribution of ODA simultaneously, and progressively positioned itself as the largest lender of the continent. Having anchored a new economic codependency in the region, facilitated by subjecting Africa to constant international support for its livelihood (El País , 2017), China has gained key relational economic favoritism that could give it a substantial advantage in future harnessing of the territory's potential.

Although the above already sounds quite worrying for the preservation of the liberal Status Quo that governs the modern world, apart from the prosperous enrichment that could settle with greater force the possible triumph of China over the United States, the prevalence of the

Figure 1- China's prevalence in Africa as a lender



Note. The amount of dollars lent by China in millions to each African country is illustrated according to the chromatic range stipulated in the bar, reproduced from Préstamos a los Gobiernos Africanos (200-2019), El Orden Mundial, 2022, (www.elordenmundial.com), CC BY 2.0.



great Asian nation in Africa also implies a certain anti-democratic political directionality, which can not only promote the maintenance of the state of security crisis of many nations, but also exacerbate it. With an index of full democracies in Africa of just 17% according to Freedom House and only 4% according to the estimates made by BTI (2021) (see Table 1), The chances that Western international donors will place their trust that the resources invested will be well used by the various recipient governments is getting smaller, especially when considering the fact that more than 50 million dollars a year from donors are lost due to corruption (*El orden Mundial, 2020*).

Since the absence of democracy is the greatest disincentive for the liberal countries of the first world to commit themselves deeply to the cause of re-stabilization of the region, the vindication of crimes such as human trafficking, sexual exploitation or arms trafficking (which ultimately aggravates more internal conflicts) seems more and more distant (*Ayuda en acción, 2018*).

**Table 1-** African Political Systems distribution 2019

Índice de democracia	Freedom House	V-Dem*	BTI
Democracias plenas	17%	17%	4%
Sistemas mixtos	45%	79%	67%
Autocracias rígidas	38%	4%	29%

**Note.** *Ideas (2021)*

Although the Western bloc has been consistent in supporting the old continent, with Europe topping the list of supporters of Africa as the largest investor in the region (*Agenda Pública , 2019*), in conjunction with the US support that, above all, has remained in the task of contributing, (*Noticiero de Radio Martí, 2020*). The truth is that declining estimates of African social stability lie in wait for a growing economic crisis stemming from the large external debt that countries such as Sri Lanka, Ghana, Suriname, Angola and Ethiopia have accumulated. (*Péridico 26, 2022*), which would imply, considering the insufficiency of the current efforts involved, the impossibility of efficiently stopping the catastrophe. With the impediment of international law regarding the interference in the independent sovereignty of each State (*Kaiser, 2010*), the liberal coalition of the first world only has to wait for the appearance of a reason for humanitarian intervention of weight, or failing that, an economic or strategic incentive that requires immediate action.



## Hydrocarbon crisis in Latin America: the social outbreak towards a new north

The Latin American region has been characterized, since the founding history of its constitution, by the prevalence of manifest social protest in multiple sectors of its civil society. Despite seeing the detriment of the vassal relations with the Spanish crown after the multiple pro-independence declarations of opposition, the predisposition to insurgency and nonconformity managed to survive throughout the generational passage to the point of becoming a historical legacy for the disadvantaged classes that, as a result of the perpetual friction with unsatisfactory or directly segregated government leaderships, was consolidated as a trend (Blanco, 2010). With the validity of the hydrocarbon crisis hitting the economies of the region, the revival of social discontent seems an inevitable phenomenon; However, unlike the same opposition front, the current prevalence of leftist governments in the most relevant nations of the region is to resize the security problem related to these demonstrations towards its relative reduction, especially in the framework of a new non-Western world leadership.

With the change in oil prices as a result of the war in Ukraine (see figure 2), various nations of the Latin American complex see significant effects on the family basket of their citizens (Giordano & Michalczewsky, 2022), as there is considerable dependence on the different utilities derived from hydrocarbons, countries such as Mexico, Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia and Venezuela, whose oil income varies between 4% and 19% of their GDP, are subject to these changes (Oquendo, 2018).

Figure 2 - Increase in oil prices because of the war in Ukraine



Note. Barrel price in dollars, Reproduced from El precio del barril de Brent en el año en dólares, Bloomerang, 2022, (www.cinco dias el pais.com). CC BY 2.0



*The advantages for the creation of new alliances based on the current predominance of the left may be somewhat more diffuse than they seem.*

The recent national strike in Ecuador, relevant to the point of compromising the useful life of Guillermo Lasso's mandate (*France 24, 2022*), represents a significant example of the political importance of hydrocarbons in the stability of the Latin systems. Although the Ecuadorian case does not fall within the bloc of the new Latin American left, similar effects are expected, in fact, in the nations that have now assumed a new political reconfiguration.

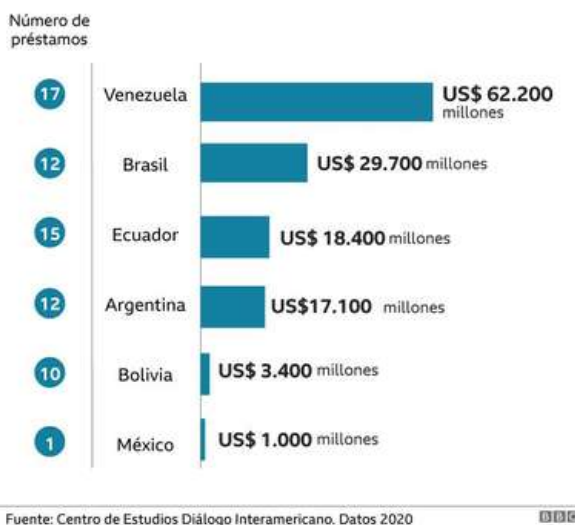
In a first instance, it is possible to conceive a popular incentive for the abstention of social mobilizations derived from the new prevalence of governments aligned with the causes of claim of the protesters themselves, however, there is another reason that can result, in the medium and long term, more relevant for the temporary appeasement of dissatisfactions: a probable economic stabilization coming from the political and commercial advantages that open up on the other side of the world with this change of wing.

Coined as a silent conquest, China, according to an official of the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has granted through its Development Bank and Export-Import Bank, close to 140,000 million dollars in loans to the Latin American region since the 2005 (*El Debate, 2022*). Being a truth that the social discontent in the region against right-wing regimes has been aligned with the negative attribution of the US neoliberal agenda (given its historical tax nature) (*CGTN Español, 2022*), It does not seem so surprising to think that, in the midst of the growing rise of the People's Republic of China as the future leading pole of the world, and with certain Russian attempts to establish new alliances to consolidate its power (*The New York Times, 2022*), the new wave of the Latin American left could serve as the basis for a deeper political, economic and cultural relationship with the East than the great North American star could wish for.



**Figure 3-** Economic presence by Chinese loans in Latin America

### Ranking de países de América Latina por el valor de los préstamos de China



**Note.** Reproduced from *Ranking of Latin American countries from the value of Chinese loans*, Center for Inter-American Dialogue Studies, 2021, ([www.bbc.com](http://www.bbc.com)) CC BY 2.0

On the other hand, the advantages for the creation of new alliances based on the current predominance of the left may be somewhat more diffuse than they seem. Far from being able to consider this new wave of the left as a direct continuation of the past pink tide presented at the beginning of the century, the current political figures in regency include to their ideological credit an even more prominent distance from communism, separating themselves with notoriety from the socialist dilution of actors like Chávez, Evo Morales, or Rafael Correa (*CNN Español*, 2022). In addition to this, despite the existing Russian attempt to supply arms to Latin America as a bridge of relationship (*CNN Español*, 2022), the war situation unfolding in Ukraine subjects the great Post-Soviet regime to a harsh international exile that compromises its strategic value as a potential ally (*El Debate*, 2022).

Despite the face of a global future oriented towards an Eastern political primacy, the ideological consistency for a coherent relationship may take a backseat. Understanding the need for a strategic alliance with the East Asian giant as a pragmatic decision for Latin American development, the protagonist of the new dilemmas could stop being oriented to the substantially ideological field of compatibility between lefts, and begin to reconfigure itself in, for example, conflicts of geopolitical interest due to military advantage, as occurred during the cold war.



# LOCAL

## Peacebuilding and security: The diffuse bet of the new government

With the recent inauguration of Gustavo Petro, the first candidate in the history of Colombia from the left to be elected as president of the republic, a political reorientation drastically antagonistic to the strong continuity of the neoliberal right is awaiting his entire electorate. (*El País*, 2022). With the prevailing welfare and social reparation as a primary component of its operational intent, Petro establishes the paradigmatic assumption of a state of "Total Peace" as one of the central axes of its governance. (*La silla Vacía*, 2022).

Although the declaration may be striking due to the ambitious assumption of historical resolution to which it seems to respond, far from representing a merely dispositional requirement task, it represents a prominent challenge to face in a national panorama constituted by the state fragmentation in peripheral areas of the territory, and strong roots of criminal armed groups operating simultaneously (*Rebolledo & Villegas*, 2018).

Defining Colombia as a world power of life, Petro establishes the path for total peace around four points of execution: the resolution of negotiations with the ELN, the submission and negotiation with armed groups such as the Clan del Golfo, the planned ideation to finally put an end to the FARC dissidents, and, in the same way as the previous point, carry out a similar plan to deal with the fighters of Marquetalia (*El País*, 2022). Although Petro's work in presidential management has had, to date, the undeniable brevity of just under a month, the structural redirection that it presupposes for the security institutions oriented towards an unprecedented humanitarian focus, generates a lot of uncertainty in its members. While it seems to be governed, mainly, under an ideologically popular guideline, and not a realistically strategic one (*BBC*, 2022).

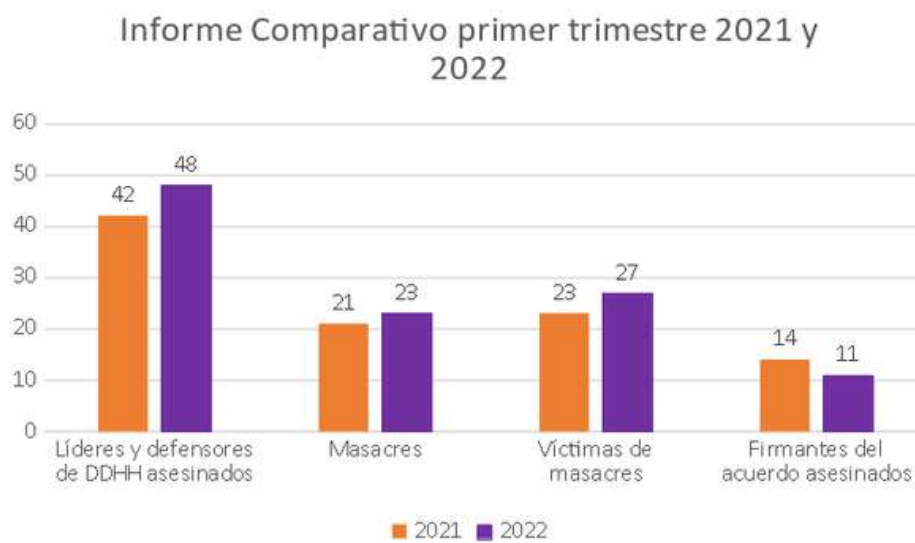
*Defining Colombia as a world power of life, Petro establishes the path for total peace around four points of execution*





With the uncertainty that the current military and police training, coming from a tradition of offensive resolution, can live up to the political expectations that rectify its usefulness as the vanguard for the prevalence of total peace (BBC, 2022), the transparency of a security plan that guarantees practical protection becomes doubtful. In turn, outside of a composition exclusively focused on the effective deployment of armed forces throughout the country, the entrenchment of criminal structures in rural areas systematically devoid of a proper State presence represents an even more complex problem to solve. (El Tiempo, 2021).

**Figure 4 - Comparison of murders first quarter 2021 and 2022**



**Note.** The usefulness of the graph is illustrative insofar as it shows the growing deterioration of security derived from the ever-increasing power of armed groups, adapted from Comparative report first quarter of 2021 and 2022, indepaz, 2022 ([www.prensa-latina.cu](http://www.prensa-latina.cu)), CC BY 2.0.

In municipal areas such as San Vicente del Caguán, Gaitana, Puerto Asís, Tarazá or Turbo (not to mention a dozen more), there are deep structural ruptures that make it impossible to guarantee real correspondence with the guidelines expected for the new peace, (Mauricio García Villegas, 2018) understanding the equidistant composition of the social fabric of peripheral communities under the shelter of these authoritarian governments (Aponte et al., 2021). State consistency for a satisfactory repair and stabilization would require a much greater involvement than could be expected in just 4 years of change.



Now, despite the fact that there are certain favorable provisions on the part of the leading armed groups in the current conflict towards the new social democratic administration (*Ideaspaz, 2022*), the peacebuilding and the peacekeeping, imply meticulousness in the characterization of the groups with which it deals (*Bellamy, Williams, & Griffin, 2010*). Despite the fact that it can be affirmed that with the leading rise of the ELN on the political agenda, procedural problems seen before can be solved (given the absence of the FARC or predominant paramilitary groups)(*El País, 2022*), the truth is that, far from having a conventional conformation and operability, this organization has been composed, from its foundations, of a strong disarticulation in its actions (*Ramírez, 2021*).

With a binational component that exceeds the border delimitation with Venezuela (*El espectador, 2022*), and an operational parallelism that generates inconsistencies in his political discourse (see, for example, the attack on the Santander General Police school contrary to the narrative of the central command), the federalist consolidation of the ELN complicates a hypothetical peace process as it makes the tangible guarantee of a significant decrease in violence impossible (*Mauricio García Villegas, 2018*). Similarly, the Clan del Golfo, second on the list to be dealt with, shares this disjointed procedural factor, as well as illegitimacy (although to a different extent) within the framework of international law due to the breach of minimum human rights guarantees and drug trafficking.

With the Santos peace treaty only 30% complete, according to the Kroc Institute (*2022*), given the methodological nature of its constitution, and a not very clarified (to date) government action plan aimed at giving continuity to this process, the commitment to the effective formation of a "total peace", in the attempt to start parallel to other pacification processes (numerous if we also include the many other groups that despite not being so large, subsist with authority) seems less and less reliable, especially in the framework of an economic reform readjusted to half of its pretensions (*El espectador, 2022*).



**Figure 5 - Humanitarian situation in Colombia**



**Note.** Reproduced from Critical map of the humanitarian situation in Colombia, CICR, 2021, ([www.icrc.org](http://www.icrc.org)), CC BY 2.0.

Understanding peace as the most effective historical (contemporary) measure for the resolution of violent conflicts in the Colombian and Latin American framework in the long term (ECP, 2022), it bet continues to be a non-negotiable priority, however, in the estimation of the short and medium term, the conservation of certain conventional security parameters is necessary to stop the strengthening of the different armed groups outside the law.

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