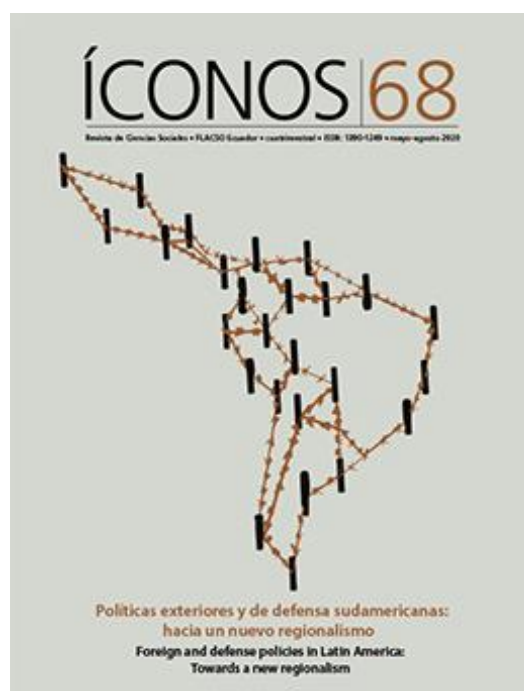


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**Foreign and Defense Policies in Latin America:
Towards a New Regionalism**



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The objective of this dossier is to jointly analyze the foreign and defense policies of countries in South America from the 21st century to the present moment. This objective emerged from the need to study the process of political-ideological changes in South America and their impact on public policies, as well as the need to jointly address the

interrelation between foreign and defense policy, common in some countries but not in the South American region.

Throughout the new millennium Latin America in general, and particularly South America, has gone through stages where the regional governments have privileged different political leanings. During the first decade a progressive framework prevailed, which was metaphorically called the “shift to the left” or “pink tide”. Currently a return to neoliberal perspectives is being imposed, which is characterized by “right-wing governments”, although in neither of these stages the political-ideological sub-regional scenario has been homogeneous.

Two profiles among those who were part of the “pink tide” were identified in the first stage: the new left-wing governments and the governments catalogued as populists, which include another set of countries that maintained the political, economic, and defense logic that prevailed during the 1990s. Despite the differences in the approaches of the governments in South America, it can be asserted that both groups that participated in the “pink tide” were able to impose their imprint in international South American relations during the first decade of the 21st century. Nevertheless, the predominant political profile of South America from 2015 forward is the one posited by center-right leaning governments that understand regionalism from a different perspective.

These changes have had an impact on international South American relations and on the configuration of foreign and defense policies. Although this scenario does not always mean a structural change will take place, the speed at which new center-right governments, especially in Argentina and Brazil, modified and continue modifying public policies, has had multiple consequences that must be studied. The goal of consolidating a cultural transformation at the social level that will be anchored in said political-ideological shift and will limit the possibility of a return to progressive and/or popular alternatives must be studied as well.

In this context, beyond the economic shift towards neoliberalism, foreign and defense policies have been deeply affected, modifying in a significant way the criteria established by post-liberal and post-hegemonic regionalism. This scenario allows us to question if a new emerging model led by center-right governments is possible. At the moment, we can observe proposals of international insertion that privilege the search for autonomy; the diversification of networks; the consolidation of a South American agenda; the establishment of an economic neo-development model; cooperation in the defense area; and efforts to move forward towards this goal in a civil way.

We are moving towards a scenario that is characterized by the search of a pro-western insertion (limited by the influence of China); the shutdown of multilateral spaces, such as UNASUR and consequently, the South American Defense Council; the proposal of the creation of PRO-SOUTH with the participation of countries identified as center-right leaning and open regionalism; the de-hierarchization of South America as a priority area in foreign actions of the States in the region; and the advancement of preexisting ideas and practices aimed at blurring the limits between security and defense in many South American countries. These characteristics have had disparate and concerning effects, such as the strengthening of the “political” role of the Armed Forces in some countries and the assignment of tasks connected to public security in places where this used to be illegal.

The intensity and advancement of these changes merits an academic detailed analysis that is grounded and that seeks to shed light on the uncertainty and challenges faced by South American foreign and defense policies in the current sub-regional scenario.

In order to accomplish this task we propose as tentative research areas a set of questions about South American countries: What are the main differences between South American foreign and defense policies of the first decade of the 21st century and those of the current governments, as well as their articulation with different conceptualizations of regionalism? Do the modifications in the leaning of foreign and defense policies of the new right-wing governments constitute a structural change or are they just indicative of a scenario that will not be solidified? What were the main causes of the quick vanishment in the advancement of autonomous approaches and proposals of foreign and defense policies? Are the center-right South American governments creating a new regionalism? To address these questions from a comparative perspective we suggest the following subthemes to be analyzed:

- Patterns of foreign and defense policies of the 1990s, of the shift to the left and return to the right in South America.
- Comparative analysis of foreign and defense policies.
- Impact of the policies of the United States on foreign and defense policies in South America.
- Role of the Armed Forces in the region.
- Political leanings of the bureaucracies of foreign and defense policies.

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