

A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE UNITED STATES' NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY AND ITS IMPACT ON LATIN AMERICA

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ABSTRACT

The National Security Strategy (NSS) are specific documents prepared periodically by the United States' executive, describing the main concerns of Americans' national security and developing strategies to face the challenges. At the same time, by exposing the US government's strategic vision, it contributes to informing the US government's approach and intent on various topics related to security and foreign policy. This paper seeks to analyze the NSS of the last four American presidents, in a time frame that runs from the immediate post-Cold War to Trump's administration, as well as its influences with regard to Latin America. Using a quantitative method, through the frequency content analysis, and a qualitative methodology, based on the empirical-deductive method, the central objective is to rationalize that, although there was a relative power vacuum at the beginning of the 21st century, there is a return of the region as an important geopolitical and geoeconomic space in contemporary times.

Keywords: National Security Strategy. United States. Foreign Policy. Defense Policy. Latin America.

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INTRODUCTION

The National Security Strategy (NSS) are specific documents prepared periodically by the United States' executive – jointly with the Departments of State and Defense, Pentagon, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Department of Commerce and the Secretary of the Treasury – for the Congress, describing the Americans' main concerns related to national security and developing strategies to face the challenges. The legal basis for the document is spelled out in the Goldwater-Nichols Act², and its implementation is based on the guidelines' preparation provided in supporting documents (such as the National Military Strategy - NMS).³

In this way, the NSS contributes to different American purposes, indicating the ways and means to be used to achieve the strategic objectives, serving as a guide for the planning, organization and execution of the tasks pertinent to the Departments and Agencies under the executive power, and consisting of an executive instrument to justify the funds requested from Congress. At the same time, by exposing the US government's strategic vision, the NSS contributes to informing the US government's approach and intent on several security, defense and foreign policy topics, both to the internal and external public. (SILVA, 2013, p. 454-455)

This paper seeks to analyze the National Security Strategy of the first administrations⁴ of the last four American presidents: Bill Clinton (1993-2000), George W. Bush (2001-2008), Barack Obama (2009-2016) and Donald Trump (2017-2020), in a time frame that runs from the immediate post-Cold War to contemporary times, as well as its influences with regard

² Goldwater-Nichols was signed by President Ronald Reagan in 1986 and was established to reorganize the Department of Defense and strengthen its civilian authority, aiming to improve the military advice provided to the President, to the National Security Council and to the Secretary of Defense. This law reformed the military structure of the United States by establishing a simplification of the chain of command (from the president through the secretary of defense directly to combatant commanders), as well as the authority and responsibility of those commanders, increasing the formulation of strategies to provide a more efficient use of defense resources, improving management policies for joint officers, making military operations more effective, and enhancing the Department of Defense management and administration.

³ The National Military Strategy is issued by the Chief of Staff of the Army jointly with the Secretary of Defense, briefly describing the strategic objectives of the armed forces. The main source of guidance for the NMS is the National Security Strategy (NSS) document.

⁴ Priority was given by the use of only one document from each government, once the geostrategies of Clinton, Bush and Obama reelection's administrations have not changed significantly.

to Latin America. Using a quantitative, through the frequency content analysis, and qualitative methodology, based on the empirical-deductive method, the central objective is to rationalize that, although there was a relative power vacuum at the beginning of the 21st century, there is a return of the region as an important geopolitical and geoeconomic space in contemporary times.

The work is divided into three sections. First, an US government documents analysis is carried out in a systemic and general way, in the period between the end of the Cold War and Donald Trump's administration. In the second section, it will be evaluated the NSS reflexes for Latin America, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. In the final remarks, it is concluded that there is a strategic direction of the United States' foreign and defense policy in the international system that influences Latin America.

SYSTEMIC ANALYSIS OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

A) A NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF ENGAGEMENT AND ENLARGEMENT – BILL CLINTON

The pillar of the Clinton administration's national security strategy (UNITED STATES, 1996) is based on the triad ensuring security, leveraging the economy and promoting democracy. Since the US leadership is essential to the world after the Cold War, there have been changes in security imperatives, whose previous fight against communism had been replaced by "new global threats", such as proliferation of nuclear weapons, environment degradation, population growth, political instability, terrorism, international crimes, and drug trafficking.

In other words, in order to justify the high military spending and the global presence, there was a prerogative that the US national interest was being threatened by these new challenges, requiring the use of its military apparatus. For Padula (2018, p.48), both the geographic area of action and the threats to be fought were made more flexible, which become subjective and imprecise, according to what its members identify or interpret.

When our national security interests are threatened,
we will, as America always has, use diplomacy

when we can, but force if we must. [...] We must use military force selectively, recognizing that its use may do no more than provide a window of opportunity for a society — and diplomacy — to work. We therefore will send American troops abroad only when our interests and our values are sufficiently at stake. (UNITED STATES, 1996)

The so-called “National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement” is based on expanding the market democracy community and stopping threats to the nation; in other words, international engagement (based on national interest) would be the conquest of markets and minds, the attraction of other states through the liberal economic path, co-opting into the system of multilateral organizations, strengthening and reforming them. (PECEQUILO, 2012, pp.17-18) Therefore, geopolitics and globalization merge in such a way that they form an epistemological whole (GOES, 2018, p.515), wherein a safer world would guarantee global markets without recognizing borders; it is the logic directly proportional between the increase in democracy and free market, leading to increased security and the proliferation of the “American way of life”.

According to Goes (2018, p. 502), the Clinton Doctrine would be the globalization’s phenomenon of the economy basis, developed from the collapse of the Soviet Union (USSR) and which modifies the logic of the Containment Strategy that prevailed throughout the Cold War. Thus, in the face of such a highly complex, uncertainty and instability scenario, the American strategists soon realized the necessity to engender a new strategic archetype, now focused on the neoliberal epistemological project of opening world trade and legal reduction of the State (GOES, 2018, p. 509-510).

In practical terms, the establishment of priority guidelines was seen, according to the trinomial security-economy-democracy: in the first, there was the enlargement of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the attempt of nuclear disarmament, a diplomacy with North Korea, the search for peace between Israel and Palestine and the fight against terrorism; with regard to the economy, the foundations of the global economy were established through the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and, in Latin America, the first outlines of what would later be known as the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA); in democratic aspects, the aim was to create

free societies, mainly national states belonging to the former USSR, with human rights having a substantial prerogative.

B) THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF THE UNITED STATES – GEORGE W. BUSH

In contrast, the main axiom in the Bush administration (UNITED STATES, 2002) was the rhetoric of the Global War on Terror, whose pillars were based on protection and security of American citizens *vis-à-vis* the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. In focusing on a preventive war against any threat – effective, potential or imaginary – the United States advocated the right to constant surveillance and immediate attack, if necessary. In addition, a fundamental characteristic is the imposition of the so-called *Pax Americana*, here envisioned as a unipolar order of a specific type: either it is my friend or it is my enemy (GOES, 2018, p. 502).

According to Padula (2018, p. 49), in 2002, the National Security Strategy document spelled out the doctrine of “preemptive strikes”, which gave greater flexibility to US military action, as long as they unilaterally identified a potential threat linked to the action of terrorist groups, in any part or national territory around the globe. The neoconservative unilateralist discourse, which has seen multilateralism as a demonstration of weakness, gains strength as an ethical discourse against evil, legitimizing global intervention. Still according to Goes (2018, p. 503: 517), this doctrine tried to impose a unipolar world order based on a geopolitical leviathan, ensuring peace and security in the system which challenged the international legal order and its multilateral organizations. Therefore, the Bush Doctrine presented itself as an anti-Kantian element of axiological neutralization of International Public Law and International Humanitarian Law.

In the economic sphere, based on the neoliberal model, the Bush Doctrine favored a peaceful and cooperative relationship with other states, as long as they were based on correct national plans: “this Administration’s goal is to help unleash the productive potential of individuals in all nations. Sustained growth and poverty reduction is impossible without the right national policies. Where governments have implemented real policy changes, we will provide significant new levels of assistance.” (UNITED STATES, 2002) In this perspective, it deconstructs the Clinton paradigm by reducing the assertiveness of economic pressures for liberalization and

opening up markets and, concomitantly, retaking the military paradigm with greater intensity.

In other words, the terrorist attacks were the geopolitical prerogative to abandon the Engagement and Enlargement's paradigm – which sought to maintain the US global leadership by controlling the world economy and, according to the Bush Doctrine, would have been one of those responsible for the 9/11 terrorist attacks by relegating the military character to the background – and establishing its new paradigm, the *Pax Americana* strategy of “world police”, based on the use of military force and the political crusade of the war on terrorism. Still, more than the establishment of terrorism as an enemy, and the priority of asymmetric wars between the United States and smaller countries or private transnational groups, the Bush Doctrine's innovation was the introduction of the prevention's concept as a reference to action instead of the containment. This reaffirmation of unilateralism indicates that the United States would act decisively against its enemies, preventing the emergence of threats before they arise. (PECEQUILO, 2012, p. 22)

The War on Terror Doctrine was in force for basically the entire 2000s and, in Goes' view (2018, p.520), its lack of commitment to the world economy made possible the geopolitical rise of China and its penetration in Africa, Latin America and part of Asia, in addition to the rise of the BRICS. By viewing terrorism as a diffuse, timeless and non-centralized enemy, to ratify the defense of national security through war, the United States

will continue to work with our allies to disrupt the financing of terrorism. We will identify and block the sources of funding for terrorism, freeze the assets of terrorists and those who support them, deny terrorists access to the international financial system, protect legitimate charities from being abused by terrorists, and prevent the movement of terrorists' assets through alternative financial networks (UNITED STATES, 2002).

C) NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY – BARACK OBAMA

In Obama administration (UNITED STATES, 2010), guidelines were established based on the relative loss of American power in the international system, verified through the fall of the US economic competitiveness and its fiscal and trade deficits. Especially after the 2008

crisis, American strategists have been realizing the need to revitalize their economy for greater external influence assertiveness, aiming at its substantial national renewal and the resumption of global leadership; in other words, this crisis would serve as the basis for American hegemonic reconstruction in the 21st century.

New skills are needed to foster effective interaction to convene, connect, and mobilize not only other governments and international organizations, but also non-state actors such as corporations, foundations, nongovernmental organizations, universities, think tanks, and faith-based organizations, all of whom increasingly have a distinct role to play on both diplomatic and development issues. (UNITED STATES, 2010)

The international system underwent innumerable changes after the 2008 crisis, as it has been noted that the United States' role in controlling the globalization and financialization process has been weakened. In addition, there is a new correlation of the world power geometry, the rise of a multipolar order with indigenous geopolitical ambitions, which compete and rival with the *Pax Americana* and have the capacity to resist the US vital interests (GOES, 2018, p. 522).

In a specific case, competition between the United States and China delineates the new post-crisis geopolitical configuration of 2008, present in the Obama administration's NSS as a tool to contain Chinese expansion in the world, especially when it states that the Doctrine Obama would be a reissue of the Containment Strategy, just as the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative is a reissue of the former Soviet World Island conquest strategy (GOES, 2018, p. 527).

Thus, one of the main actions of the Obama Doctrine was to establish multilateralism based mainly on a strategy of transoceanic alliances. In other words, it sought to resume the transcontinental economic cooperation initiative relegated by Bush. According to Pecequillo (2012, p.27), the aggressive prevention of NSS-2002 is abandoned, being replaced by a more cooperative style that should focus on partnerships. Furthermore, the diffuse nature of the threats is highlighted, as well as the power of the emerging ones. Therefore, alliance strategies with their traditional partners are conceived, based on the Transatlantic Trade and

Investment Partnership with Europe and the Trans-Pacific Partnership with Japan (GOES, 2018, p. 527).

Padula (2018, p. 51) sustains that this specific NSS reaffirm the importance of preserving the US military superiority and its ability to face multiple threats from nations, non-state actors and failed states, but bringing back the multilateralism issue, through “comprehensive engagement” under American leadership, and the importance of spreading power from a moral point of view (or from a legitimately accepted ethical discourse), which would have been undermined by the Bush’s administration unilateralism.

It is interesting to note that its general lines propose a resumption of engagement present in the Clinton’s administration and neglected in the Bush Doctrine, mainly on issues such as combating extremism, the nuclear threat of mass destruction, sustainable economic growth and global warming. Concomitantly, particular nuances of enlargement are verified, according to the globalization’s benefits as a product of American leadership. Still, four national interests are aimed at greater performance in the world, based on security, prosperity, American values and international order, whose use of the term responsibility to protect (R2P)⁵ is assertively emphasized in the document, determining the possibility of unilateral actions if American national interests are in jeopardy.

The United States must reserve the right to act unilaterally if necessary to defend our nation and our interests, yet we will also seek to adhere to standards that govern the use of force. Doing so strengthens those who act in line with international standards, while isolating and weakening those who do not (UNITED STATES, 2010).

⁵Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is a global political commitment endorsed by all states of the United Nations and has the purpose of preventing genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Based on this policy, the international community has a responsibility to help States build the capacity to exercise their primary responsibility, as well as to use the diplomatic, humanitarian and other means necessary to protect populations against these crimes. If there is a State’s failure, collective action should be taken to protect the population, thus admitting military intervention in the defense of human rights. However, R2P has been commonly used by the United States for the purpose of intervening in foreign countries that are contrary to its geostrategic precepts or that affect American national interests, giving rise to unilateral measures outside the scope of the United Nations Security Council (SOUZA, 2011, p.164; BANDEIRA, 2016, p. 478).

C) NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY – DONALD TRUMP

At Donald Trump's administration (UNITED STATES, 2017), the NSS has as its main landmark its campaign logo: America First, an strategic conception that denies the triad's theory (US-European Union and Japan as the international systems' core) and creates the bases for the economic (des)globalization and international isolationism era (GOES, 2018, p. 502). This would be the foundation of the future US leadership in the world, serving as a basis for national interests outline on the following topics: protection of the american way of life (border control and immigration system reform, cyber defense and jihadist threat); promoting US prosperity (domestic economy for the benefit of the US and its workers, as well as energy abundance); preservation of peace by force (reconstruction of the military sector and avoiding regions domination by "external threats" to national security, including China, Russia and Rogue States, such as North Korea and Iran); and improving the American influence (American values for security and prosperity).

One of the main points for the empirical observation is the relationship between the United States and China presented in the document. The NSS points to the need for American protectionism as a reaction to Chinese growth, since American domestic markets would no longer be able to compete with the Chinese. Therefore, the resumption of the America's First concept can only be fully understood from this perspective of US commercial economic protectionism in relation to China (GOES, 2018, p.532), corroborated by the Chinese-American trade war, by the exit of multilateral arrangements such as the Transpacific and Transatlantic Partnerships, by the reformulation of Nafta 2.0 (USMCA) and that, in the last case, the American government should serve domestic workers rather than the so-called global workers.

According to Goes (2018, p. 530), the NSS is still linked to the epistemological project of *Pax Americana*, based on the resumption of American global leadership. What changes is the strategic archetype that is now considered to be qualitatively superior to the other previous models concentrated in large multilateral alliances. In other words, it can be seen an anti-globalization process, with the prerogative that the other countries did not join free trade, only obtaining their gains, while the burden would have remained in charge of the USA. In light of this, the American strategist did not hesitate to adopt a disruptive movement in relation to the great

multilateral cooperation arrangements, replacing them with protectionist that can strengthen the USA geopolitical musculature (GOES, 2018, p. 532).

Thus, there is a demystification of the globalization process and of the doctrine that encompassed both engagement and enlargement, concomitantly with a return to global competition and the contestation of a supposed geopolitical (being a prerogative to increase military spending) and geoeconomic (establishing the economic diplomacy that maintains its leadership) advantages that the United States would have had in international relations.

Another interesting point in the document is the existence of the Second to none concept. According to him, there is no possibility of a military force competing with the USA. In other words, the Americans must do everything to avoid the rise of a second great power, to be unmatched in military terms. Therefore, they opt for the unilateral American power exercise, either through the division and dispersion of competing countries, or through boycotts of any type in political-economic blocs, such as MERCOSUR, UNASUR and the BRICS.

In Fiori's view (2018, p. 398-399), the document's originality is found in some points that support a new world view of American foreign policy, distinct from its secular tradition. By redefining the world system as a space of permanent competition between national states for global power, the United States would have the right to use its position of economic strength – for example, through trade wars and economic sanctions – as instruments of war, aiming at their national interests. The United States, therefore, gives up the idea of universal ethical and cultural hegemony and opts by the use of force and weapons, if necessary, to impose its interests on all the geopolitical and geoeconomic boards of the world. Even if it is made through changing governments and regimes that they considered a political or economic threat to US interests.

The table below summarizes the main points of analysis surrounded by National Security Strategy, according to the last four US presidents.

Table 1 – National Security Strategy – main points of analysis

NSS - The White House	Strategy axiom	Historical context	Main features
A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement (Bill Clinton)	Ensuring security, leveraging the economy, and promoting democracy	Post-Cold War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Washington Consensus * Combating “new threats” * Engagement and enlargement * FTAA * “The end of history”
The National Security Strategy of the United States (George W. Bush)	Global War on Terror (protection and security)	Post-09/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Military priority * Patriotic Act * Project for the New American Century (PNAC) * Pax Americana Theory * Bilateral agreements
National Security Strategy (Barack Obama)	Resumption of American leadership (and economic recovery)	Post-global financial crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Renew American leadership * Three-dimensional liberalism (TPP, TTIP, TISA) * Responsibility to protect * Post-crisis economic reconstruction
National Security Strategy (Donald Trump)	America First	Post-globalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Economic protectionism / military interventionism * Exit from TPP and Paris Agreement * NAFTA 2.0 * Trade wars * Second to none

Source: own elaboration based on the National Security Strategy

The achievement of the NSS is the product of a long struggle within the United States’ political forces, which analyze different priorities and strategies. However, a systemic axiom is visualized: the segment directly linked to the management of the American military empire has, ultimately, been dictating the rules since the end of the Cold War until

Trump's administration, whose possibility of change can only occur if there is a new balance of forces in the international system.

In the next section, the specific points of tangency related to Latin America present in the NSS will be analyzed. In this way, a quantitative and qualitative research will be addressed in order to visualize the reverberation of US strategic guidelines in Latin America.

IMPACTS OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY FOR LATIN AMERICA

Methodologically, a comparative content analysis will be carried out, understood as an investigation technique that, through an objective, systematic and quantitative description of topics manifested in the documents, aims at its qualitative interpretation. In this way, based on thematic content analysis, using certain keywords, the aim is to extract references to Latin America and its national states with the corresponding guidelines of US foreign policy.

In the table below, three thematic categories converging with the scope of the work were expressed and used: Latin America, South America, and Latin American countries. These categories were adopted as recording units, i.e., the basis for counting the frequency in which they appear in the analyzed documents. Then, a qualitative analysis will be carried out between the compiled data, in order to highlight the NSS's reflexes for Latin America.

Table 2 – Frequency of thematic categories in National Security Strategy documents

NSS - The White House	Thematic Categories		
	Latin America(n) (number of citations)	South America(n) (number of citations)	Latin American Countries (number of citations)
A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement (Bill Clinton)	5	2	Argentina (3); Brazil (4); Chile (6); Cuba (9); Ecuador (2); El Salvador (1); Guatemala (3); Haiti (20); Mexico (9); Peru (2); Uruguay (12)
The National Security Strategy of the United States (George W. Bush)	2	1	Brazil (1); Chile (2); Colombia (4); Cuba (1); Mexico (2)
National Security Strategy (Barack Obama)	1	0	Argentina (1); Brazil (6); Haiti (2); Mexico (4)
National Security Strategy (Donald Trump)	1	0	Cuba (4); El Salvador (1); Guatemala (1); Honduras (1); Venezuela (3)

Source: own elaboration based on the National Security Strategy

With regard to the Clinton Doctrine, references to Latin America and South America are made from the observation of the regional economic situation fragility, that directly affects its insubstantial democratic models, in which the NSS proposes “the enlargement of the community of market democracies.” (UNITED STATES, 1996) Additionally, there is a quote of peace operations that have provided breathing room for fledgling democracies in Latin America, as well as the theme of prevention, treatment and economic alternatives to help nations develop healthy economies with fewer market incentives for producing narcotics, through bilateral and regional cooperation aimed at curbing international drug trafficking: “the United States has increased efforts abroad to foster public

awareness and support for governmental cooperation on a broad range of activities to reduce the incidence of drug abuse.” (UNITED STATES, 1996)

Specifically in the “Integrated Regional Approaches” section, referring to “The Western Hemisphere”, it advocates respect for democratic values, in which “the unprecedented triumph of democracy and market economies throughout the region offers an unparalleled opportunity to secure the benefits of peace and stability and to promote economic growth and trade.” (UNITED STATES, 1996) The Summit of the Americas, in December 1994, is explicitly cited, when the 34 democratic nations of the hemisphere committed themselves for the first time to the goal of free trade in the region by 2005, the FTAA’s ideological embryo. Still in terms of regional hemispheric cooperation, it ratifies the Organization of American States (OAS) importance for the connections with Latin America, as well as points out the NAFTA’s economic successes for the United States, “with substantial increases in US exports to both Mexico and Canada, creating new jobs and new opportunities for American workers and business.” (UNITED STATES, 1996) In summary, the main US strategy objectives in the document would be present in the region, stating that

the Western Hemisphere, too, is a fertile field for a strategy of engagement and enlargement. Sustained improvements in the security situation there, including the resolution of border tensions, control of insurgencies and containment of pressures for arms proliferation, will be an essential underpinning of political and economic progress in the hemisphere (UNITED STATES, 1996).

The only three direct references to the region in the Bush Doctrine are related to democratic processes of openness as opposed to authoritarian systems, setting an example when the “elected leaders replace generals in Latin America.” (UNITED STATES, 2002) Concomitantly, it resumes the approach of regional confrontations caused especially from the violence of drug cartels and their accomplices, in which this conflict and unrestrained narcotics trafficking could imperil the US health and security. As a solution, the United States would have “developed an active strategy to help the Andean nations adjust their economies, enforce their laws, defeat terrorist organizations, and cut off the supply of drugs.” (UNITED STATES, 2002) In this regard, an even more offensive topic is the classification of South America as regimes that harbor, support, and

use terrorism to achieve their political goals; in other words, it places the region as one of the possible trained terrorists' cells and a battlefield in the fight against global terrorism.

Specifically in the Western Hemisphere, in the sections "Work with others to Defuse Regional Conflicts" and "Ignite a New Era of Global Economic Growth through Free Markets and Free Trade", NSS-2002 addresses the energy security theme, demonstrating the need to strengthen it and work with allies, trading partners, and energy producers to expand the sources and types of global energy supplies, including the Western Hemisphere, and also the formed flexible coalitions with Latin American countries, promoting in the future a truly democratic hemisphere while working with regional institutions, such as the Summit of the Americas process (FTAA), the OAS, and the Defense Ministerial of the Americas.

The United States and other democracies in the Western Hemisphere have agreed to create the Free Trade Area of the Americas, targeted for completion in 2005. This year the United States will advocate market-access negotiations with its partners, targeted on agriculture, industrial goods, services, investment, and government procurement (UNITED STATES, 2002).

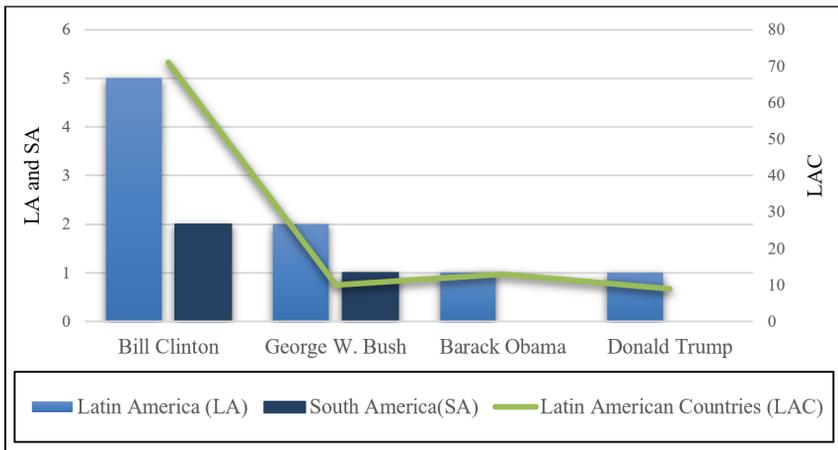
In the Obama Doctrine, by being a more general strategy that attempts to reformulate the bases of the United States' hegemony in the international system, as seen in the previous section, the direct reference to the proposed thematic categories refers to the dual role of international institutions, as they play an important function in simplifying cooperation, but routinely fails to effectively deal with new threats or seize new opportunities. Thus, in Latin America, "new and emerging powers hold out opportunities for partnership, even as a handful of states endanger regional and global security by flouting international norms." (UNITED STATES, 2010)

Finally, in the Trump Doctrine, the only quote to Latin America is made from the possibilities of the United States and its partners to have opportunities to work with countries to help them realize their potential as prosperous and sovereign states, mainly "for investments and financing to develop their infrastructure and propel growth." (UNITED STATES, 2017) In the section entitled "The Strategy in a regional context", for Western Hemisphere it has been stated that democratic, stable, friendly, and prosperous states enhance the US

security and economy, helping to reduce violence, drug trafficking, and illegal immigration, and promoting the expansion of American goods and services, energy and infrastructure projects, and foreign direct investment. Among the challenges mentioned, the transnational criminal organizations that perpetuate violence and corruption are cited, as well as governments cling to anachronistic leftist authoritarian models, which enabled competitors to have found operating space in the hemisphere. As examples, it points to China’s attempt to pull the region into its orbit through state-led investments and loans, and the political-military influence of Russia, supporting dictatorships in the region.

Thus, NSS-2017 scores three priority actions in the region: in political terms, the United States will catalyze regional efforts to build security and prosperity through strong diplomatic engagement, and also isolating “governments that refuse to act as responsible partners in advancing hemispheric peace and prosperity” (UNITED STATES, 2017); in economic terms, the US will modernize the trade agreements, deepen economic ties by ensuring fair and reciprocal trade and encourage market-based economic reforms; and in military and security terms, it is proposed to reduce crime and corruption through cultures of lawfulness, “including by supporting local efforts to professionalize police and other security forces; strengthen the rule of law and undertake judicial reform; and improve information sharing to target criminals and corrupt leaders and disrupt illicit trafficking.” (UNITED STATES, 2017)

Figure 1 – Frequency of thematic categories in National Security Strategy documents



Source: own elaboration based on the National Security Strategy

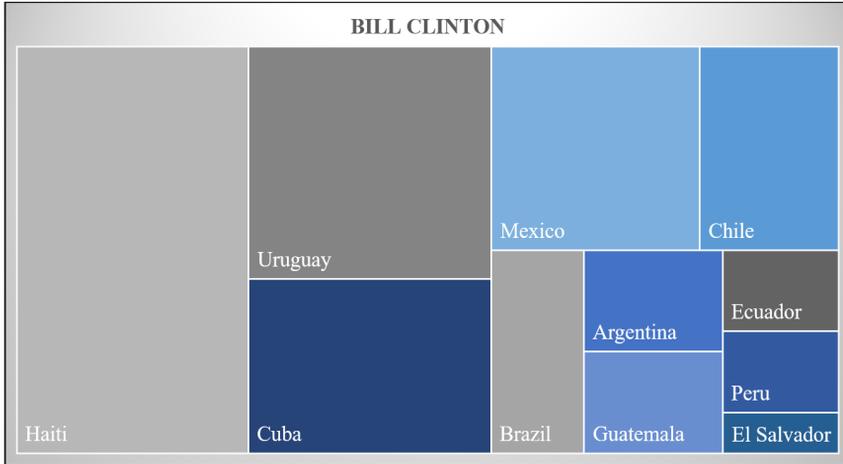
Analyzing the four documents, we can see the sharp drop in the frequency of Latin America's thematic categories in National Security Strategy documents. In general terms, a possible explanation consists of a more veiled and less explicit economic, political and military performance, which are not included in official documents and it is ratified by economic interference via financial sanctions, military action through military bases and political influence in democratic processes in Latin America. Furthermore, by considering the region as a perimeter of security, the United States qualifies it as an immediate area of supremacy guided by a dependence position, in which, according to the classic American strategist, Nicholas Spykman (1942, p.60), Mediterranean America is configured as an area in which the US supremacy cannot be questioned: it is a closed sea whose keys belong to the United States. As approached by Rodrigues (2018), these facts do not diminish the Latin America geostrategic importance for the United States, but it mitigates the need for constantly mention the region in official documents, internalized in the geostrategic guidelines.

It can also be seen that the redirection of the United States' Great Strategy to the Middle East, right after the September 11 terrorist attacks, enabled a power vacuum unprecedented in Latin America. Subsequently, the emphasis on economic recovery after the 2008 financial crisis meant that the themes of NSS-2010 were treated in global terms, and less regionally. Finally, the centralization of the dispute between the United States, China and Russia in Trump's Great Strategy is another factor that helps in understanding the apparent paradox. However, in this last document it is possible to view some evidences that signal for the resumption of the region on the American geopolitical radar in the late 2010s and early 2020s.

The other quantitative approach taken from the proposed method consists of counting the times that Latin American countries appear in the National Security Strategy. In a sense, this demonstrates the degree of US interaction, performance and strategic direction in certain Latin American countries, which vary according to the international situation and the basic premises of each document.

In the Clinton Doctrine, the countries most cited were Haiti, Uruguay, Cuba, Mexico and Chile, respectively.

Figure 2 – Latin American countries’ frequency by number of citations (Clinton)



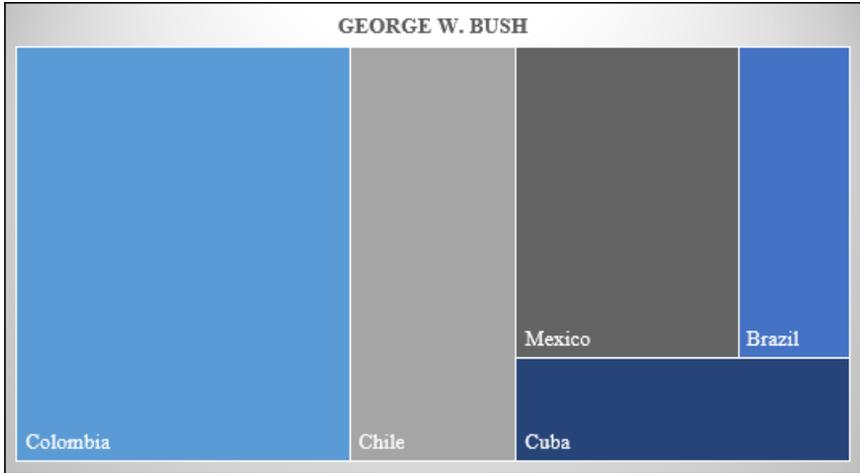
Source: own elaboration based on the National Security Strategy

Haiti was the country with the highest number of recurrences throughout the document, whose arguments were centered in reversing the *coup d'état* and restoring the democratically elected president and government. In this way, the United States’ engagement prerogative focuses on helping the Haitian people rebuild their country, consolidate their democracy through free elections at all levels, prevent large-scale migration and avoid the possibility of war. In other words, fully in line with the main prerogatives of the Strategy previously analyzed.

Uruguay is widely cited, but totally related to the Uruguay Round of GATT, which culminated in the creation of the WTO and enabled the United States to have greater persuasive power in its long-term trade reform project. Cuba appears next, with claims centered on the rhetoric that the Caribbean island is not a democratic state and is ruled by a dictator, in which the US goal is the peaceful establishment of democratic governance for its people. References to Mexico correspond to the newly created NAFTA, while Chile appears as related to the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the negotiations on expanding NAFTA's membership.

At NSS-2002, Colombia, Mexico, Chile, Brazil and Cuba were the Latin American countries with the greatest recurrence in the official document.

Figure 3 – Latin American countries' frequency by number of citations (Bush)



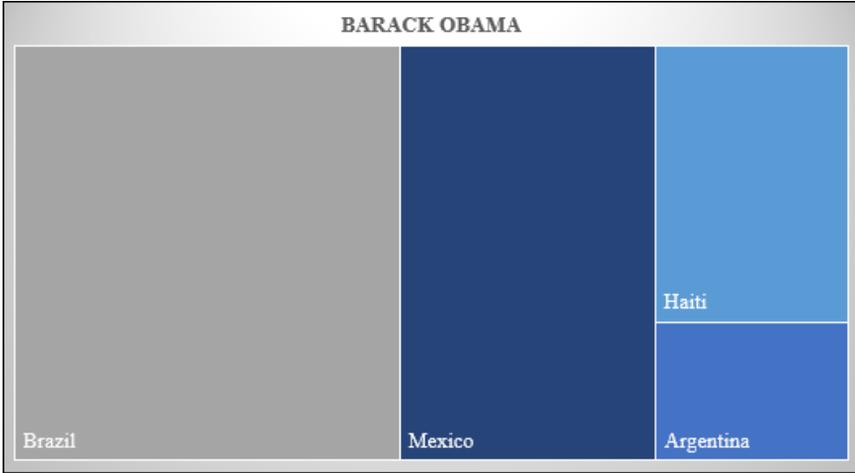
Source: own elaboration based on the National Security Strategy

Colombia's primary recurrence in the Bush Strategy is highly understandable, given that, in addition to being a flexible coalition that share US priorities during the 1990s, it has been recognized in Colombia the link between terrorist and extremist groups related with drug trafficking activities that help finance the operations, according to the US administration. In this sense, NSS-2002 proposes to work together to defend Colombian democratic institutions, and defeat illegal armed groups by extending effective sovereignty over the entire national territory. In other words, the protection and security strategy backed by Global War on Terror is present in Latin America through the Colombian case.

Chile and Mexico appear in sequence with two recurrences, both presented as coalition partners, as well as the attempt to complete free trade agreements with Chile, and enforce trade agreements and laws against unfair practices with Mexico. Cuba and Brazil present only one quote, related to deterrence as an effective defense, taking as an example the Cuban missile crisis in the Cold War, and the flexible coalition with Brazil by sharing US priorities, especially when considering its political-economic interaction in international relations during the 1990s.

In the Barack Obama administration strategy, references to Brazil, Mexico, Haiti and Argentina stand out.

Figure 4 – Latin American countries' frequency by number of citations (Obama)



Source: own elaboration based on the National Security Strategy

It is no surprise to international analysts that Brazil has emerged prominently in NSS-2010, given its relative macroeconomic success and leadership role in South America and Latin America during the 2000s, with integration projects such as MERCOSUR and UNASUR. Additionally, by the construction of a new institutional framework within the BRICS, that has been directly diverging from the United States' strategic objectives in the international system. Therefore, the Obama Doctrine proposes to work to build deeper and more effective partnerships with increasingly influential nations, like Brazil, aiming at cooperation both bilaterally and globally.

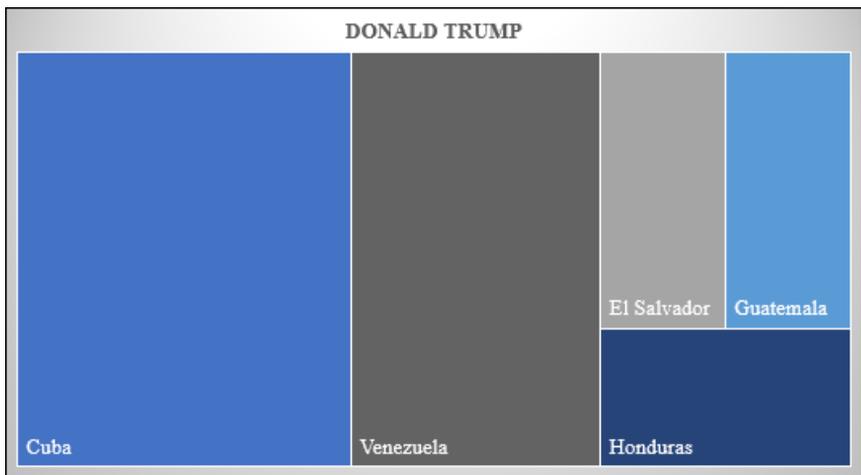
We will encourage Brazilian efforts against illicit transnational networks. As guardian of a unique national environmental patrimony and a leader in renewable fuels, Brazil is an important partner in confronting global climate change and promoting energy security. And in the context of the G-20 and the Doha round, we will work with Brazil to ensure that economic development and prosperity is broadly shared (UNITED STATES, 2010).

The other country most present in the document is Mexico, largely due to strategic partnerships through NAFTA, considered critical to U.S. national security. In addition to trade cooperation, the US are trying to interdict threats even before they reach North America, in which stability

and security in Mexico are “indispensable to building a strong economic partnership, fighting the illicit drug and arms trade, and promoting sound immigration policy.” (UNITED STATES, 2010) Then comes Haiti, in which the United States proposes to renew its leadership in the multilateral development banks and the IMF in order to secure fragile states, like this country, and also leading efforts to address humanitarian crises, such as Haiti’s devastating earthquake. Argentina has been specifically related to the rise of the G-20, as the representation of a distinct shift in global international order toward greater cooperation between traditional major economies and emerging centers of influence.

In the Trump Doctrine, the National Security Strategy centralizes its operations in Cuba, Venezuela, Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador throughout Latin America.

Figure 5 – Latin American countries’ frequency by number of citations (Trump)



Source: own elaboration based on the National Security Strategy

In NSS-2017, both Cuba and Venezuela have a parallel in the United States’ strategy in Latin America. In the document’s perspective, both present anachronistic leftist authoritarian models that continue to control the government, being widely supported by Russia and China. The United States has the role of isolating governments that refuse to act as responsible partners in advancing hemispheric peace and prosperity,

aiming at “the day when the people of Cuba and Venezuela can enjoy freedom and the benefits of shared prosperity, and we encourage other free states in the hemisphere to support this shared endeavor.” (UNITED STATES, 2017)

It is imperative to analyze Venezuela’s unprecedented recurrence, including from the explicit quote that “both China and Russia support the dictatorship in Venezuela and are seeking to expand military linkages and arms sales across the region.” (UNITED STATES, 2017) Additionally, since the Trump administration’s assertiveness in this Caribbean country in the years after the document was verified, this fact demonstrates its strategic role in the US geopolitics for Latin America, including being an indicative sign for the 2020s. In other words, competition and conflicts between China, the United States and Russia are expected to increase exponentially, as well as the American decision to strangle the Venezuelan economy and society, through commercial and financial sanctions, and currently through a naval blockade that could soon turn into a military invasion or an aerial bombardment made from its own ships that are deployed in the Caribbean sea. It would be the first war in Latin America that would involve the world’s great military powers.

Finally, the only citations referring to Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala relate to transnational criminal organizations, including gangs and cartels that perpetuate violence and corruption, and also threaten the Central American states stability.

In general, the comparative content analysis made it possible to verify that the NSS’s main points of analysis, analyzed in the previous section, are present in the US geostrategy in Latin America. In other words, from a qualitative interpretation, Bill Clinton’s strategic axiom was visualized, mainly related to ensuring security, leveraging the economy, and promoting democracy, enabling a strategic action focused on the economic dimension based on the engagement and enlargement strategy in Latin America. As for the Bush Doctrine, its Global War on Terror is seen in the military priority related to protection and security, mainly from the concepts of Hemispheric Security and *Pax Americana*, including South America in its list. Subsequently, the Obama administration’s National Security Strategy was guided by the American leadership’s resumption, whose strategic guidelines are related to international cooperation, mainly in the economic area, as well as the strengthening of international institutions. Last but not least, the Trump Doctrine is guided by a post-

globalization world, aiming at economic protectionism in the United States, and the intensification of military interventionism abroad, where the geopolitical radar includes Latin America.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article sought to evaluate the official United States' foreign policy documents, the National Security Strategy, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, and their correlation with Latin America. More broadly, it is reiterated that in all documents there is permanently a justification and legitimation for the intensification of American military expenditures. By aiming at the presence and training of global military intervention, the US military-industrial complex has been proposing a continuing technological and military race within a system unsettled by the idea that war is a regular instrument of conflict resolution, and that it can be fought anytime and anywhere, against any rival, enemy or former ally (FIORI, 2018, p. 399).

From the research carried out, it can be seen that 2001 was a turning point in the United States' foreign policy. Until this year, the geopolitical and geoeconomic commitment in Latin America has been high, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, corroborated by the analysis of the Clinton Doctrine. After the terrorist attacks in 2001, the strategic redirection allowed the United States to loosen control over the world economy through its War on Terror political crusade, in addition to allowing the emergence of power vacuum in different geopolitical trays in the international system, among them Latin America, permitting the entry of new actors, such as China, whose presence has been increasingly marked and provides a scenario of dispute between the two great powers in the region.

In other words, the Bush Doctrine distinguished itself from its predecessor with the Engagement and Enlargement's strategy and from its predecessor with the attempt to resume global leadership by post-financial crisis multilateralism in 2008. Despite a resumption of US strategic direction in Latin America with the Obama Doctrine, viewed from the attempts at bilateral agreements and the formation of the TPP, this becomes more explicit in the Trump Doctrine, mainly with the explicit quotes and constant attacks against the Venezuelan government. In short, the geostrategic action points to the continuity of the perception relating

Latin America as part of the American's defense front line, inserted in the concept of hemispheric defense.

In such a way, from the qualitative analysis of the documents, it is conjectured that Latin America is outlined as a sensibly geostrategic area in the medium term, visualizing a revival of the region as a geopolitical and geoeconomic space. The threats perpetrated by military bases, by economic persuasion, by neoliberal attacks, by interference against the sovereignty and integration of Latin American political forces, are factors that make it possible to understand an unlimited complex war, a power project and domination aimed at underdeveloped countries. With this, a liberal ideological basis and the use of new information technologies are used, as well as indirect and veiled interventions that intend to destroy power projects that are contrary to the geostrategic objectives of United States' expansion.

UMA AVALIAÇÃO CRÍTICA DA ESTRATÉGIA DE SEGURANÇA NACIONAL DOS ESTADOS UNIDOS E SEU IMPACTO NA AMÉRICA LATINA

RESUMO

As Estratégias de Segurança Nacional (NSS) são documentos específicos preparados periodicamente pelo executivo dos Estados Unidos, descrevendo as suas principais preocupações da segurança nacional e desenvolvendo estratégias para enfrentar os desafios. Ao mesmo tempo, ao expor a visão estratégica do governo dos EUA, contribui para informar a abordagem e as suas intenções em vários tópicos relacionados à segurança e à política externa. Este artigo busca analisar as NSS dos últimos quatro presidentes americanos, em um recorte temporal que vai do imediato pós-Guerra Fria ao governo Trump, assim como suas influências no que diz respeito à América Latina. Utilizando-se do método quantitativo, através da análise de conteúdo de frequência, e uma metodologia qualitativa, baseada no método empírico-dedutivo, o objetivo central é racionalizar que, embora tenha havido um relativo vácuo de poder no início do século XXI, existe um retorno da região como um importante espaço geopolítico e geoeconômico na contemporaneidade.

Palavras-chave: Estratégia de Segurança Nacional. Estados Unidos. Política externa. Política de Defesa. América Latina.

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