

Latin America in Limbo in 2018: Washington's "Operation Condor 2.0"

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Latin America is in limbo as the US' "Operation Condor 2.0" has more or less succeeded in reducing multipolarity in the region, though the upcoming Mexican and Brazilian presidential elections might herald a paradigm shift if leftists win the highest office in both Great Powers.

The US has systematically dismantled multipolarity in the Western Hemisphere ever since it began its asymmetrical counteroffensive in 2009 by supporting the military coup against Honduran President Manuel Zelaya. Since then, the leftist governments in Argentina and Brazil fell due to electoral and constitutional coups, severely reversing the effects of the "Pink Tide" and opening up the Mercosur trading bloc to the same type of neoliberal influence that it had previously intended to thwart.

Venezuela has been in the throes of a deadly and ever-escalating Hybrid War for almost the past three years, and while the government of President Maduro hasn't been toppled, its regional influence has been considerably weakened as a result. Moreover, the US is assembling a coalition of regional states to intensify the pressure being put on the Bolivarian Republic, possibly heralding in a new "Lead From Behind" model that could be used elsewhere in the hemisphere.

Speaking of which, it appears likely that [Bolivia](#) will be in for a period of unrest next year after the announcement by the country's court that President Morales will be allowed to run for a fourth term despite last year's referendum on giving him this right being narrowly defeated at the polls. Bolivia is also the central transit state for China's Transoceanic Railroad that will connect Peru and Brazil, so the US has yet another reason to seek the destabilization of this multipolar gas-rich socialist state that's recently expanded its partnerships with both Russia and China.

[Nicaragua](#) might also experience difficulties as well as the government of President Ortega is forced to respond to the declining economic situation in the Western Hemisphere's second-poorest country and avoid the Hybrid War trap being set in sparking a repeat of the Contra-era eastern Mosquito Coast conflict. Neighboring Honduras, which is one of the largest origin states for illegal migrants to the US and also a crucial transit location for drug trafficking operations, might descend into unrest if the people continue agitating against the government after President Juan Orlando Hernandez stole the last election to hand himself an unprecedented second term in office.

For as strategically hopeless of a situation as this may seem, there are actually two potential opportunities for reversing the course of events and pushing back against the unipolar dominance that's crept back into the hemisphere, and they both come down to

next year's presidential elections in Mexico and Brazil. [Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador](#), popularly known by his abbreviated initials as AMLO, is a leftist-nationalist opposition leader who's wildly popular in Mexico and has a serious chance at winning the presidency in July. He's already contested several elections in the past, barely losing in 2006 because of what he alleged had been voting fraud, and his potential victory next year could spice up the American-Mexican relationship.

AMLO is regarded by many as being a Mexican version of Trump, albeit from the leftist angle, and while far from being a second Chavez, his entrance to office could immediately have far-reaching consequences for the US, most notably in terms of renegotiating NAFTA and dealing with illegal migrants. It's far too early at this point to gauge his prospects for winning, but nevertheless, there's a lot of positive energy surrounding him, and it can't be discounted that he might at the very least pull off a repeat of the 2006 elections where he ended up claiming victory but blamed his eventual razor-thin defeat on fraud. This scenario could unsettle the situation in Mexico and turn the country into a security risk for the US, which is why it must be monitored.

As for Brazil, the ruling authorities are waging "lawfare" in trying to prevent the ultra-popular former president affectionately known as Lula from running for office again, relying on his purported connection to the extensive "Operation Car Wash" corruption scheme to argue that this makes him ineligible to stand. In any case, the Workers' Party might do fairly well and could capitalize on the widespread resentment against Temer's rule to pull off a victory, but at the same time, voters are indeed disillusioned by the scandal-plagued party and might opt for Soros-linked Marina Silva and her new Socialist Party offshoot called the Sustainability Network.

Because of the uncertainty over Latin America's geopolitical direction, it's reasonable to describe the entire region as being in limbo between multipolarity and unipolarity, with the pro-US forces on the strategic initiative but nevertheless not yet totally back into power. The upcoming elections in Mexico and Brazil will to a large extent determine the future trajectory of the hemisphere, as will the outcome of the Hybrid War on Venezuela and any incipient conflicts that also might be hatched against its Bolivian and Nicaraguan partners.

The post presented is the partial transcript of the CONTEXT COUNTDOWN radio program on Sputnik News, [aired on Friday Dec 29, 2017](#):

https://video.img.ria.ru/Out/MP3/20171229/2017_12_29_CONTEXTCOUNTDOWN134291217_1wnafm3h.gcv.mp3

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