

The South American Defence Council and the Subversive Activities of the Pentagon

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A scandal has once again broken out in Bolivia with regard to the transfer eight years ago of 37 Chinese-made ground-to-air missiles to the US military «for deactivation». Vice-President Álvaro Linera has accused former army chief Marceo Antezana, who is now an opposition senator in parliament, of betraying the country's national interests. Antezana is doing everything he can to try and justify his actions, referring to the dilapidated condition of the missiles and the danger they posed to military personnel one moment, and the direct order of the then President Rodriguez regarding the missiles' transfer to Americans the next. It would be appropriate to remember that back in 2005 when these events were unfolding, the US Embassy announced that the missiles «could be used for their intended purpose in certain circumstances despite their defects».

In other words, the military efficiency of the missiles was not in doubt, and the headquarters of the Southern Command of the US Army had decided that the government of Evo Morales, who had won the presidential elections, could not be trusted with such dangerous weapons. As his presidential term came to an end, Rodriguez came under pressure from the American Embassy and the missiles were taken out of Bolivia on US Air Force transport planes. In the country's patriotic circles, it is still regarded as the most shameful and humiliating episode in the history of Bolivia's armed forces. Almost every country south of the Rio Grande has come face to face with this kind of dictate at various times. Washington has used the 1947 Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance as a disciplinary «choke chain». The Pentagon decided who Latin America's main enemy was, how the continent's «internal enemies» should be dealt with, which weaponry should be used and what kind of uniforms should be worn by the national armed forces and so on.

The Inter-American Treaty only began to show signs of irreparable strain after the victory of the Cuban Revolution and the establishment of extremely close ties between Cuban and Soviet armed forces, as well as [after the Falklands War](#), when the US openly supported England against Argentina. Latin Americans began to think about their own role in ensuring the security of the continent and these tendencies increased following the emergence of the ALBA bloc – the Bolivarian alternative for Latin American nations. Hugo Chavez regularly referred to the need to strengthen military cooperation between Latin American countries, linking this goal with the Latin American integration process. The [Venezuelan leader](#) did not hide the fact that he was troubled by the increase of US aggression in various parts of the world and the inordinate cruelty with which Pentagon globalisers disposed of «unfriendly» regimes. Chavez was convinced that the Empire would, sooner or later, take advantage of its crushing military power to «establish order» in the Latin-American and Caribbean region in keeping with its plans for a Pax Americana.

The South American Defence Council was established in March 2009 and includes 12 states. The Council declared its main objectives to be the consolidation of South America as a zone of peace and a basis for democratic stability, and the full development of the people inhabiting it. The emergence of a South American identity in the area of defence, which makes full allowance for subregional and national characteristics, encourages a strengthening of the unity of Latin American and [Caribbean countries](#), and a consensus on regional cooperation in the area of defence is going to be worked out. The issue is already being discussed by the Council, including emerging disagreements with regard to military budgets and the settlement of present-day conflicts; measures to ensure external security are being coordinated.

It is symbolic that such high-profile South American politicians as Inácio Lula and Hugo Chavez were among the originators of the Council. They constantly emphasised the fact that if leading regional politicians did not take it upon themselves to solve the issue of the continent's peace and security then it would be done by other forces alien to Latin America. And then there would be no guarantees that weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear missiles, would not show up there, especially in the South Atlantic. From the very outset of the Council, the decision was made not to allow [the US to be involved](#), since it does not have a geographical relationship with South America. The Empire, however, along with its most dependable ally – the UK – believe otherwise. Their submarines armed with nuclear warheads regularly patrol the South Atlantic, ignoring all calls to preserve the denuclearised zone. Evidence exists that there are atomic warheads at the British military base on the Falkland Islands and the means to deliver them. So with the full knowledge of the Pentagon, the conditions of the Treaty of Tlatelolco on the creation of a nuclear-free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean are being ignored. The treaty was signed in February 1967 and was the collective response of the countries in the region to the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. This aspect of the issue had always worried [Brazil](#), since 90 percent of their trade was carried out across the Atlantic. The situation is now even more complicated due to the discovery of rich oil and gas reserves in the territorial waters of [Brazil](#) and [Venezuela](#), and US oil companies want to be involved in their development on a priority basis.

Council member countries are insistent that NATO's organisation and structure will not be replicated in any way, since the Council of Defence is not a «traditional military alliance» with the prospect of carrying out «operations» outside of South America. It has no kind of punitive functions! Neither is there expected to be an arms race in the region, although the objective of creating a credible deterrence posture is being discussed in earnest. Joint armament projects are under discussion at conferences involving the Council's representatives in order to develop a defence doctrine. Upon the initiative of Argentina, the first of these will be the creation of the training aircraft UNASUR-I by 2017, which will train air force pilots from South American countries. Brazil is going to oversee the regional drone project. There is also a plan to form the UNASUR space agency so that in time there will be greater independence to create satellite communications systems and, apparently, to carry out space surveillance in the interests of defence. The all-out espionage being carried out by American intelligence agencies is giving rise to a distancing in this sphere from the Pentagon.

The creation of a South American School of Defence (Esude) is an important aspect for the strengthening of mutual trust between militaries. According to the latest information, the school is going to be set up in Ecuador. President Rafael Correa has declared that he is prepared to do whatever is necessary to speed up the implementation of the project.

Military experts see this initiative as the desire to do away with the negative legacy of the School of the Americas once and for all, a school that was set up under the aegis of the Pentagon and which was known by the macabre name of the «School of Assassins and Terror». In April 2013, under pressure from human rights organisations, a federal judge of the Northern District of California decided to declassify materials on the School of the Americas, which operates under the name of The Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation» (SOA/WHINSEC). Until 1984, the School of the Americas was situated in the Panama Canal Zone before being moved to Fort Benning (America). The Pentagon is disputing the judge's decision, believing that in this instance, human rights defenders will obtain additional confirmation of well-known facts about how the school's graduates (nearly one thousand every year) have stained themselves with numerous crimes. Hundreds of thousands have passed through the torture chambers – raped, humiliated, driven mad, murdered and missing Latin Americans – all to the credit of the instructors and teaching staff at the School of the Americas. As a rule, «death squads» in [Argentina](#), [Bolivia](#), [Brazil](#), [Nicaragua](#), [Guatemala](#), [Honduras](#), [Salvador](#), [Columbia](#) and other countries have been headed by graduates of the school.

In order to neutralise the efforts of the South American Defence Council, the United States is modernising its strategy in the Western Hemisphere, trying to make it more flexible and «humanitarianly appealing». This is why the US military is playing an increasingly active role in «social development» projects for the region's most backward countries. The number of US military bases, both supporting and auxiliary, is constantly on the rise and is nearing seventy. The largest concentration of them can be observed along the borders of Venezuela, [Ecuador](#) and Brazil. The branched structure of military bases in Columbia, a country virtually occupied by the Pentagon, represents a threat to peace in Latin America. According to experts, a complex scenario by the Pentagon to provoke a war between Columbia and Venezuela is ready and just waiting for its time to come. José Vicente Rangel, the former defence minister in Chavez's government, warned about this time and again.

In order to undermine military integration plans in South America, Washington is strengthening the structure of the Pacific Alliance (Alianza del Pacifico) which includes Columbia, Peru, Mexico and [Chile](#). The Alliance is seen not just as a counterbalance to populists, but as a long-term military and political alliance against «Brazilian expansionism». The Pentagon's efforts to split the South American Defence Council and introduce conflict between its individual members have been an open secret for a long time.

The Empire is in a hurry to divide and rule, since the governments of the countries affiliated to the Pacific Alliance are not as stable as they seem. But will the Obama administration really embark upon the large-scale destabilisation of South America?

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