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## RUSSIA RELATIONS WITH KEY LATIN AMERICAN PARTNERS

### ABSTRACT:

Cooperation between Russia and selected countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (including Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela and Brazil) has been developing since the 2000s. For the Russian Federation, the primary value of this region lies in its geographical proximity to the United States. In the last two decades Russia has played roles such as an investor in the energy sector, a supplier of arms and armaments; it also provided the Sputnik V vaccine against COVID-19. For Latin American countries, relations with Russia afford greater autonomy compared to those with the US, as well as diversification of their export markets. The objective of this article is to analyze the main dimensions of mutual cooperation and relations between Russia and its key partners in LAC region and to demonstrate how the Russian invasion of Ukraine has altered these dynamics. Russia has forged lasting partnerships with three authoritarian regimes in the region: Nicaragua, Cuba, and Venezuela. Furthermore, Brazil, a member of the BRICS alliance, plays a pivotal role in Russia's strategy to challenge U.S. dominance in the region and promote a multipolar world order.

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Since the beginning of its invasion of Ukraine in early 2022, Russia has been intensifying its efforts to gain partners and bolster its image as a global power. The analysis revealed that after two years of full-scale war Russia's relations with its key partners in Latin America remain more political or geopolitical than commercial in nature, yet these relations are mutually beneficial. Furthermore, despite the heterogeneous nature of LAC countries, Russia enjoys considerable political support for its actions in this region.

**Keywords:** *Russia, Latin America, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba, Brazil, political and military relations*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since 2016, Latin America has been an integral part of Russia's Foreign Policy Concept - the strategic document outlining the principles, priorities, and goals of the country's foreign policy. The aim of this shift was not simply to open to a new markets, but rather to ensure that this region maintain political neutrality concerning Russia's conflict in Ukraine. It should be noted that Russia actively engages in countries experiencing internal crises or external conflicts. To this end, it utilizes a wide range of instruments, including mutual support in multilateral forums, loans, trade of goods, military assistance, and cultural diplomacy.

Western nations refer to such involvement as "hybrid warfare". It's characterized by the combination of conventional methods, irregular formations, asymmetric tactics, and terrorism with criminal activities. This form of planned and synchronized influence on adversaries employs both military and non-military instruments. Such activities include multi-level efforts aimed at destabilizing state functions and altering its internal order (Banasik, 2016). The Russian perspective on contemporary warfare is predicated on the notion of psychological combat within the minds of people, leading to an extensive use of information influence to secure psychological advantage. Within the current geopolitical order, Russia's adversary is Western civilization, encompassing its values and culture, political system, and ideology (Bērziņš, 2014).

From the onset of the third decade of the 21st century, the Russian Federation has increasingly concentrated its foreign policy efforts on the African

continent (notably including Mali, Sudan, Libya, and the Central African Republic). In these countries, Russia has established military and political support bases while exploiting abundant mineral deposits, thereby decreasing the impact of Western sanctions imposed in response to its military actions in Ukraine (Stanyard & Vircoulon & Rademeyer, 2023). Another strategic direction of Russian foreign policy is the Western Hemisphere. Cooperation with key partners in Latin America and the Caribbean (Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Brazil) was reinstated in the early 2000s and has continuously developing since. For Russia, the crucial value of this region lies in its geographical proximity to the United States. By penetrating the so-called “near abroad” of the US, Russia aims to weaken American influence in the region. Hence, in recent years, President Vladimir Putin has endeavored to maintain privileged bilateral relations with both governments that oppose US policies and those that resist Washington's hegemony (Brazil). Additionally, Russia has formed strategic partnerships with countries that share its vision of a multipolar world. This includes cooperation in international forums like BRICS and G20, where Russia advocates for a balanced global order. Engagement in LAC region is also important due to economic sanctions - Russia seeks alternative markets and trade partners. Latin America countries often do not impose sanctions on Russia, allowing for continued economic cooperation.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

Numerous theoretical paradigms can be used to elucidate the nature of Russia's international policy in recent years. Within the discipline of international relations, “structural explanations of Russian foreign policy”, as articulated by Kari Roberts (2017), predominate. This paradigm posits that geopolitical considerations and the balance of power are fundamental determinants of Russia's foreign policy. It also explains that territorial ambitions and military actions are inherent in the Russian foreign policy doctrine. Critics of this approach emphasize that it does not adequately account for the critical role that ideas and beliefs play in President Putin's international policy narrative. According to the prevailing narrative: Russia's foreign policy is shaped by relations with a hostile West—particularly the United States and NATO member states, which are perceived as seeking to constrain and dominate Russia's interests on the global stage (Frear & Mazepus, 2021).

First and foremost, it should be noted that researches within the mainstream of international relations theory contributes valuable theoretical insights yet predominantly focus on individual issues or dimensions, such as the diplomatic, informational, military, or economic spheres. Such an approach can be problematic when analyzing Russia's multifaceted engagement with key partners in Latin America (Thoene et al., 2023). Therefore, this article endeavors to discuss the current dimension of Russia's foreign policy towards selected countries in the region, attempting to elucidate the priorities and scope of Russian involvement.

The purpose of this article is to conduct a thorough examination of the principal areas of cooperation and the nature of relations between the Russian Federation and key partners in Latin America and the Caribbean. Russia has established enduring partnerships with three authoritarian regimes in this region: Nicaragua, Cuba, and Venezuela. Additionally, Brazil, as part of the BRICS alliance, is a significant partner in Russia's efforts to counteract US dominance in the region and building a multipolar world order. The scope of this research encompasses a broad spectrum of Russian engagement in selected Latin American countries, focusing primarily on the military sphere, investments in the energy sector, and political relations. The timeframe under consideration spans from 2003 to 2023, with particular emphasis on the initial two years of the conflict in Ukraine, which have acted as a catalyst for shifts in Russian foreign policy.

The primary research problem is to identify the role that relations with key partners in Latin America play within Russia's foreign policy, and whether these relations have altered due to the full-scale war in Ukraine. The study employs the content analysis research method, which is an approach utilized to analyze, compare, and synthesize data from various sources. In the first section of the article, a brief overview of mutual cooperation from the early 2000s to the onset of the invasion of Ukraine will be presented, highlighting the most significant areas of collaboration. Subsequently, the author will characterize the current state of military relations. The ultimate section of the article will provide a comprehensive analysis of the mutual relations between Russia and its key partners in the region subsequent to the commencement of the full-scale war in Ukraine.

These studies provide critical insights into the geopolitical strategies and economic interactions between Russia and Latin America. By examining these engagements, we gain a deeper understanding of how Russia leverages its

relationships with countries like Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Brazil to counteract US influence and promote a multipolar world order. Furthermore, these studies shed light on the practical aspects of cooperation, including military support, economic investments, and cultural exchanges, revealing the multifaceted nature of Russian foreign policy in the region.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1. A new chapter in Russia's relations with key Latin America partners**

During the 1990s, Russian foreign policy did not prioritize Latin American countries. Historically, the Russian Federation had three key partners in this region: Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua. Relations with Brazil were influenced by political and ideological shifts, displaying distinct periods of rapprochement and estrangement. It was not until approximately 2003 that Russia began to recognize the potential of these countries as economic, political, and cultural collaborators. In 2004, Moscow commenced the intensification of arms exports to several Latin American countries (Blank & Kim, 2015). This was part of the foreign policy strategy aimed at augmenting Russia's international stature by advocating the concept of a multipolar world, in contravention to the liberal order predicated on US hegemony (Thoene et al., 2023).

The renaissance of Russia's relations with Latin American partners has been particularly prominent under the presidency of Dmitry Medvedev (2008-2012). He visited Brazil, Venezuela, and Cuba, signing numerous agreements on military, technical, energy, and economic cooperation. Russia also offered selected Latin American countries access to its satellite navigation system - GLONASS (Scussel, 2011). A significant aspect of this cooperation was the export of arms and military equipment, which included not only the modernization of existing armaments but also the purchase of new equipment. Over recent years, Russia has made significant economic strides, with trade turnover with Latin America increasing from \$5.6 billion in 2000 to \$20.8 billion in 2021. Russian banks have provided loans to countries in the region, and companies with Russian capital have invested primarily in the oil and mining sectors, also winning tenders for infrastructure projects (Shkolyar, 2021).

An important partner for Russia in Latin America is Venezuela, whose former leader Hugo Chávez was one of the most prominent opponents of US

hegemonic policies. His successor, Nicolás Maduro, continues the tradition of maintaining close relations with Putin. The two primary spheres of Russian foreign policy involvement in Venezuela are energy and arms sales. For example, Reuters has calculated that since 2006, the Kremlin and Rosneft have provided Venezuela with a combined total of \$17 billion in credits. These funds were allocated for the purchase of weaponry and investments in the energy sector (Lowe & Sagdiev, 2019). Despite possessing the world's largest reserves of crude oil, Venezuela's contribution to global oil production is minimal (below 2%). In 2019, Rosneft and the Venezuelan state-owned company PDVSA signed a series of agreements, including a strategic partnership. The Russians were granted the right to explore and extract resources on the Venezuelan shelf as well as trade Venezuelan oil and oil products. Rosneft held stakes in five extraction projects within the country (Trusewicz, 2020). Russia and Venezuela have different levels of economic complexity (ECI index). This difference reflects the varied nature of their economies and the types of goods they trade. This is one of the reasons for the imbalance in the trade balance. Finally, Russia has a significant presence in Venezuelan media. Russian news outlets, such as RT (Russia Today) and Sputnik, provide coverage of international events from a Russian perspective. On the one hand, this helps promote Russian narratives (it is used as a disinformation tube), but on the other hand, strengthens cultural ties between the two countries (Treszczotko, 2022). In summary, Venezuela is a significant strategic partner for Russia due to its anti-American policies. The bilateral relations are also based on arms sales and energy resource extraction projects.

Another pivotal Russian partner in the region, is Nicaragua, with military ties tracing back to the Soviet era. Although mutual relations had cooled following the collapse of the Soviet Union, they significantly improved during the presidency of Daniel Ortega. Nicaragua was notably the second country to recognize the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia (Świerżewski, 2022). Since 2017, Nicaragua has served as a base for the Russian satellite navigation system GLONASS. This country largely depends on Russia in terms of military support, including the modernization of its armed forces. The Russian Federation maintains a large, technologically advanced communication center on the outskirts of Managua. In 2021, Russia was among the few countries that recognized Ortega's re-election. In June 2022, the Nicaraguan president again authorized the deployment of Russian soldiers, aircraft, and ships within his state for the purposes of training, law enforcement, or crisis response. He also sanctioned small contingents of Russian military forces to be stationed in

Nicaragua for the purposes of “experience exchange and training” (Kramer, 2022). Additionally, Russia has invested in various infrastructure projects in Nicaragua. These projects include the construction of roads, bridges, and the modernization of ports. In summary, the development of mutual relations is driven by the authoritarian government of Nicaragua's desire to possess a powerful global ally willing to provide political support and intervene in domestic affairs. Conversely, Russia perceives Nicaragua as strategically valuable due to its geographical location (Rouvinski, 2023).

Relations between Cuba and Russia were revived as early as December 2000, when the Russian President offered his support for the Cuban regime, urging the US to lift the embargo. Fidel Castro strongly supported Russia in the war with Georgia in 2008. Both sides tightened economic ties. Russian were granted permission to explore oil reserves in Cuban waters and to extract nickel. Moscow also extended loans to Havana for the purchase of machinery and agricultural equipment (USD 150 million) (Schwartz, 2009). Political leaders agreed to intensify contacts in order to expand “trade, economic and investment cooperation”. As part of this commitment, in 2014, 90% of Cuba's debts incurred during the Soviet era (which amounted to USD 31.5 billion) were annulled (BBC, 2014). Russia financed a significant part of the modernization of Cuban armed forces. In 2017 Rosneft began oil deliveries to Cuba. In 2018, Putin and Miguel Díaz-Canel made a commitment to increase “strategic cooperation” and strengthen bilateral relations. However, trade relations between the two countries remain relatively modest (Rikles & Castellano, 2022). Furthermore, cultural diplomacy plays a significant role in their relationship. This includes educational programs, cultural festivals, and promoting Russian culture in Cuba. Despite profound disparities, there is a substantial strategic potential in bilateral relations arising from the necessity to construct a multipolar international system.

So far, the most geopolitically important Russian partner in the region has undoubtedly been Brazil. Both states are connected by a strategic partnership agreement and Brazil has been one of the biggest importers of Russian weapons. In 2003 the two countries signed a treaty on the transfer of military technology, an important agreement in the field of space technology, and an agreement on missile defense. In February 2013 Russia built a GLONASS ground station in Brazil, the first such infrastructure in the western hemisphere. Both governments have also decided to start cooperation on space projects (Dobronravina & Jeifets, 2019). It should be emphasized here that in this case Putin's pragmatism is based

on ideological criteria and aims at weakening US influence in the region. During the tenure of Ignacio Lula da Silva, Brazil along with Russia, India, China and South Africa established BRICS, an alliance of developing countries. The relations between Brazil and Russia did not worsen after Jair Bolsonaro came to power, although in the first years of his rule the Brazilian government leaned more towards the US (Rikles & Castellano, 2022).

### **3.2 Russia–Western Hemisphere military relations**

Latin America and the Caribbean have no traditions of being important customers of Russian arms manufacturers. In the years 2000-2016, this region accounted for only 4.6% of all recipients of Russian arms exports (Connolly & Sendstad, 2017). However, deliveries of arms have helped enhance the military capabilities of states in the region, thereby making their governments somewhat dependent on the Russian military industry. In Venezuela, the military component of trade has become necessary to keep the Maduro regime in power. For Russia, this cooperation is not solely about generating monetary revenue; it also entails other advantages. For instance, through military exercises and anti-drug initiatives, such as those in Nicaragua, the Russian authorities have successfully established and strengthened connections with local security forces. It facilitated access to regional ports and allowed for the temporary deployment of its vessels in proximity to the United States coast (Secrieru, 2021).

Russia is Venezuela's largest supplier of weapons, having sold more than \$11 billion worth of military hardware since the mid-2000s (Rikles & Castellano, 2022). According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's Arms Transfer Database, Russia has dominated the supply of arms to its partners in the region. In 2020–22, Venezuela imported over 85% of its military equipment from Moscow, including fighter jets, tanks, and air defense systems (Matheson, 2024). The two nations conduct joint military exercises, enhancing their military cooperation and readiness. The Kremlin military support to Venezuela encompasses both conventional military equipment and irregular armed non-state actors. In December 2018, two Russian Tu-160 strategic bombers, also known as "Blackjack", arrived in Venezuela. These bombers are capable of carrying nuclear weapons and demonstrate Russia's ability to project military power in the Western Hemisphere. Among the most notable acts of military cooperation in recent years is the deployment of the S-300VM air defense



system. In 2019, the Russian Ministry of Defence sent a Russian Air Force An-124 military transport aircraft, IL-62M jet airliner, and more than 100 troops to Caracas. The Russians specialists were sent to provide the radio-electronic capability to intercept communications. The S-300VM is a highly advanced air defense system capable of targeting aircraft, cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles. Its deployment enhances Venezuela's defensive capabilities and provides a significant deterrent against potential threats (Bárcena, 2022). This deployment is a clear message from Moscow to Washington, emphasizing Russia's opposition to U.S. sanctions.

Nicaragua is yet another country in the region where Russia has repeatedly deployed Tu-160 bombers and other nuclear-capable military aircraft. These deployments have been utilized by Russia to intimidate US partners in the region. Russian military aircraft have frequently violated Colombian airspace. Additionally, Nicaragua has purchased tanks, armored vehicles, military helicopters, aircraft and boats from Russia. Moreover, Moscow has established a facility in Managua to provide training for law enforcement officers from countries in the region. The facility commenced operations in 2017. Russian personnel exclusively control and operate the equipment and information gathered, while Nicaraguan officers provide security at the base (Rikles & Castellano, 2022).

The true reactivation of cooperation between Russia and Cuba began in 2011. Both sides considered signing a contract for the purchase of a production line of ammunition for the Kalashnikov assault rifle. Although the agreement was eventually not signed, the bilateral ties continued to strengthen. Military cooperation between Moscow and Havana did not violate the international law, but it clearly contributed to the deterioration of relations between Moscow and Washington. For Americans, Cuba was a "rogue state" and its trade embargo guaranteed sanctions against companies which traded with the Castro regime. However, Russian companies were not deterred by the threat of sanctions (Valdivia, 2022). In July 2014 rumors circulated that Russia may have reached an agreement with Cuba on the re-opening of the spy base in Lourdes. The announcement was undoubtedly symbolic and was part of Moscow's campaign aimed at strengthening itself as a geopolitical rival of the United States. This was a step showing that, despite the European and American sanctions imposed on Russia in response to the annexation of Crimea and the crisis in eastern Ukraine, Moscow is not a solitary player in the international arena and can form partnerships with other countries (Luhn, 2014). In 2016, Cuba and Russia signed

an agreement to modernize Cuba's defense industry. Moscow has provided military aid to its partner, including the supply of military equipment and support for the modernization of armed forces. This aid helps Cuba maintain its defense capabilities and strengthens the strategic partnership between the two countries.

During the administrations of Lula da Silva and his successor Dilma Rousseff, Brazil also purchased Russian military equipment. In 2008, Brazil and Russia signed a defense technology cooperation agreement for the joint development of fifth-generation fighter jets and a satellite launcher as well as joint use of submarines, satellites, mapping systems, remote guiding technology, and information security. However, this happened against the opinion of the Brazilian armed forces, who advocated for the development of Brazil's own arms industry. Under Lula and Dilma, Brazil purchased Russian Mi-35 attack helicopters and IGLA-S air defense missiles as well as sought to acquire the Russian Pancyr S-1 air defense system, worth USD 1 billion (Ellis, 2022). Paradoxically, the success of mutual cooperation in the field of defense is attributed to the geographical distance between Russia and Brazil. This distance reduces mutual concern regarding their security, thereby fostering greater confidence between the partners (Mearsheimer, 2001). In other words, given that Brazil and Russia are so geographically distant from each other, neither poses a direct threat to the other irrespective of their advancements in military capabilities.

### **3.3 Political relations since the beginning of the war in Ukraine**

The new concept of Russia's foreign policy, published on March 31, 2023, outlines ambitious plans for the Russian Federation to foster a multipolar world by expanding the "Russkij mir" (Russian world). Moscow pursues this mission by resolutely opposing the alleged attempts of the West to impose its neocolonial dependency and hegemony on the rest of the world. The new concept proclaims a shift in the geographical priorities of Russian foreign policy. Beyond the post-Soviet area, Kremlin prioritizes partnerships with China, India, as well as relations in Asia and the Pacific, the Islamic world, Latin America, and the Caribbean and Africa. Russia pledges to support Latin American nations in their efforts to distance themselves from the United States and its partners. This commitment encompasses the establishment and expansion of cooperation in security and military domains, as well as in military-technical collaboration. Russia aims to

fortify multifaceted partnerships with Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, and to develop diplomatic ties with other Latin American countries. Brazil is also referenced in the foreign policy document (*Concept...*, 2023).

Conversely, regarding the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Latin American countries exhibit a spectrum of divergent stances. Key partners—Nicaragua, Cuba, and Venezuela—have sided with Russia, both rhetorically and in continued economic relations. They claim that Russia is rightfully responding to NATO's expansion. Brazilian diplomats, on the other hand, condemned the use of military force by Russia, while remaining skeptical of Western actions against Putin's administration. All discussed partners and governments throughout the region (except Costa Rica) have refused to impose sanctions on Russia in response to its invasion of Ukraine (Znojek, 2022).

To date, Russia has managed to maintain strong influence in the region and has even strengthened its relations with key partners. Considering economic factors impacted by the war in Ukraine, it is worth noting that Latin American and Caribbean countries do not possess deep economic ties with Russia, especially when compared to other global powers such as the United States and China. Nevertheless, Russia has expanded its trade relations with Latin America since the European Union embargo on Russian oil products took effect in February 2023. That same year, Brazil increased its Russian diesel imports by 46-times, while fuel oil imports nearly quadrupled. This resulted in an \$8.6 billion boost to Russia, which also came from increased exports to Venezuela and Cuba (Matheson, 2024).

The strongest ally of Russia has proven to be Venezuela. Nicolás Maduro has been in favor of the Russian invasion, stating that “What they are doing against the Russian people is a crime, an economic war”. He has expressed his support for President Putin multiple times during what the Venezuelan dictator calls “the conflict with Ukraine”. Venezuela might be thus expected to vote against the UN resolutions – however, the country is unable to vote as since 2016 it has been on the UN list of defaulters owing to non-payment of mandatory dues (Omma, 2022). The war in Ukraine has led to closer military cooperation between partners. In February 2022, senior representatives from Moscow traveled to Caracas to celebrate high-level intergovernmental bilateral consultations, promising robust military cooperation for the defense of peace, sovereignty, and territorial integrity (Solar, 2022).

In recent years, Russian-Brazilian relations have been particularly uncertain. Brazil has sought to balance its relationships with Western countries

and Russia, reflecting its broader foreign policy approach. In September 2022, Brazilian Foreign Minister Carlos Alberto Franca criticized the Russian invasion. At the end of April 2022, Brazil, along with Mexico and Argentina, abstained from voting on an Organization of American States (OAS) resolution that suspended Russia as a permanent observer of the organization. The suspension was supported by 25 of the 34 member states. In a subsequent vote in early October, the OAS adopted a declaration led by Guatemala calling for an “end to Russian aggression in Ukraine”. Brazil once again did not support the declaration. In a vote on March 24, 2022, before the UN General Assembly, Brazil voted to condemn the invasion. Notably, no country in the region voted against the resolution, although four countries, including Cuba and Nicaragua, abstained from voting. Moreover, in the vote to remove Russia from its seat on the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), Brazil abstained, while Cuba and Nicaragua opposed the resolution (Kramer, 2022). Conversely, Brazil negotiated a fuel purchase agreement with Russia, leading to new fuel deliveries arriving in October 2022. In the first 10 months of 2022, Brazil increased its imports of Russian diesel by 15 percent compared to the previous year (Harrison, 2023).

Finally, it is important to consider the issue of sanctions. Partners and other Latin American countries have not joined the global sanctions against Moscow. The economic consequences of the war and related import and export restrictions are detrimental to the poorest citizens of Latin America and the Caribbean and threaten food security (Harrison, 2023). During the first year of the war, countries in the region maintained open trade relations with Russia, particularly in the import of fertilizers, fuels, and grains. These products are strategically important for the region. There are serious concerns that the ongoing fertilizer shortages will lead to a food availability crisis in 2023, exacerbating existing supply issues in South America related to drought.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

The first two years of the war in Ukraine have not significantly impacted Russia's relations with key Latin American partners. As previously observed, these relationships primarily hold geopolitical and political significance within the framework of Russian foreign policy, rather than economic or commercial importance. The overall share of global trade with key partners remains relatively insignificant. However, from a geopolitical perspective, Russia's associations with

Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Brazil are strategically advantageous. For President Putin, these affiliations present an opportunity to diminish US influence in the region. For the partner countries, relations with Russia afford greater autonomy from the United States, facilitate the development of military and energy sectors, and diversify their export markets.

Among the most important geopolitical projects, aligned with Russia's policy of opposing Western neocolonial dependence and hegemony, which the Russian Federation engages in and implements with its Latin American partners, are the following: damaging US interests and image through disinformation activities (Farah & Tavaréz, 2021); the permanent presence of Russian military forces (including mercenaries) in Nicaragua; the GLONASS project; various economic investments—from hydroelectric power plants to stakes in cryptocurrencies in Venezuela, to the strategic sale of oil to Argentina; and Russia's participation in multilateral Latin American organizations that exclude the United States and Canada (Farah & Richardson, 2022).

In light of international sanctions imposed on Vladimir Putin's regime, conducting business with Russia will likely become significantly more challenging than it has been. Moreover, Russia's poor military performance in the battles in Ukraine will render Russian weapons less attractive to buyers. Another important fact is that Russia's arms exports have dropped by 47% since 2022, marking a dramatic shift in the country's global defense industry footprint. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute report states that the decline is linked to a combination of factors: Russia's focus on supplying its own military, ongoing multilateral sanctions, and diplomatic efforts by the U.S. and its allies to steer countries away from buying Russian-made weapons (SIPRI, 2025). Nonetheless, Russia can enjoy considerable political support for its actions among its Latin American partners.

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