



From the 2000s to the present : towards an intensification of the Russian presence in the Latin American military-industrial market



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INTRODUCTION

The Cuban Revolution of 1959 and the rapprochement of the Soviet Union (USSR) with Cuba initiated the rapprochement between the USSR and Latin American countries.

During the Cold War, Latin America was one of the theaters of indirect confrontation between Russia and the United States. While the Soviet Union had very close ties with Cuba (the nerve center of Russian economic activity in the region) and Nicaragua, the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union made the 1990s the lost decade of relations between Latin America and the Caribbean. Indeed, the Soviet Union, now the Russian Federation, intended to detach itself from its communist identity and move away from its historical relations with some Latin American countries towards the United States and the European Union.

The arrival to power of Vladimir Putin in 2000 led to a total redefinition of Russia's foreign policy, motivated by the ambition to restore its place as a great power. Nevertheless, the Russian-American bipolarity that seemed to dominate international relations during the Cold War has given way to a new Sino-American bipolarity that considers Latin America as a theater of strategic and economic political competition, each one wishing to expand its respective zone of influence and implant its development model. In fact, today Russia has to deal with this new rivalry and deploys bilateral and multilateral relations with the region against the backdrop of a permanent and growing confrontation between China and the United States.

Nevertheless, if Russia has to adopt a cautious margin of maneuver in the face of the interests of the two greatest world powers, it is necessary to take into consideration the influence and the major impact of Moscow on the technical-military development of the countries of the region. In fact, the 2000s, marked by the "left turn" of Latin American governments, saw the intensification of industrial-military relations with Vladimir Putin's Russia. Although it has renounced communist ideology, post-Soviet Russia has not ceased to rule against American imperialism, operating a certain rapprochement with states that displayed a feeling of distrust and hostility towards the United States.

As the second largest supplier of military equipment and armaments in the region after the United States, Russia seems to make military-technical cooperation with the countries of the region the core of its bilateral relations in order to meet its strategic and geopolitical objectives.

Thus, this article intends to analyze the dynamics of technical-military relations between the Russian Federation and Latin American countries since the 2000s. The aim is to understand



the strategy of global implantation of Russia on the continent and to analyze the policy of rapprochement of the Eastern power with countries ideologically distant from Russia, but nevertheless object of a significant rapprochement of the latter by taking the example of Argentina.



Russian presence in the Latin American arms market

Although Russia reconsidered military-technical cooperation with the countries of the region in 2003 following the Latin American tour undertaken by Vladimir Putin, today it is the core of their strategic and geopolitical relations and has a double political and economic objective. For Russia, establishing itself on Latin American territory is a "way to develop an external, extraterritorial and extracontinental defense circuit for its own security"¹ while responding concretely to the activity deployed by NATO on Russia's borders. After an initial rapprochement with traditionally left-wing countries, current Russian foreign policy offers a special place to Latin American countries and makes military-technical cooperation "an economic field in its form and political in its content"².

If today Russia maintains technical-military relations with most of the countries of the region, it is important to remember that its ideological and strategic rapprochement with Venezuela at the beginning of the 2000s has strongly contributed to its penetration in the Latin American arms market. The rapprochement with Caracas seems to be the result of Moscow's desire to "compensate for its break with Cuba following the collapse of the Soviet Union."³ Moreover, as the main ally of the Castro regime after the accession to power of Hugo Chavez, Venezuela represented for Russia the means to re-establish progressive links with the island.

It became Russia's leading military-technical partner, so much so that between 2010 and 2016, Venezuela accounted for 80% of Russian arms and military equipment exports to Latin⁴ America. Moreover, Russia has allowed a total re-equipment of the Bolivarian army under the presidency of Hugo Chavez.

Similarly, 90% of the equipment of the Nicaraguan armed forces is of Soviet production, making Nicaragua the second most attractive Latin American country for the Russian⁵

¹ Andrei Piatakov, "Russia and Latin America in the 21st century: a difficult rapprochement, *Russia.Nei.Visions*, n°119, Ifri, July 2020.

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ Arantxa Tirado and Félix Caballero Escalante, "Rusia en America Latina: amenaza pour EE.UU?", *celag.org* <https://www.celag.org/rusia-en-america-latina-amenaza-para-eeuu/>

⁵ Andrei Piatakov, "Russia and Latin America in the XXI century ...", op.cit



industrial-military complex. The defense ministers of the two nations have a very close relationship ranging from traditional arms sales to training programs for the armed forces to the use of national military bases. In 2014, Russia was negotiating with the Cuban, Venezuelan and Nicaraguan leaders for the use of Nicaraguan military bases, ports and airports for refueling Russian aircraft in exchange for sending Russian military personnel to train national soldiers. In 2016, Daniel Ortega purchased a batch of Russian tanks for \$50 million. The rapprochement of historically ideologically close countries has made Russia a country identified as an ally of leftist forces, causing some difficulties in the establishment of bilateral relations especially during the period identified as the turn to the right in Latin America.

Nevertheless, during the last five years, Russia has become considerably involved in its foreign policy towards Latin America. Deputy Defense Minister Alexander Fomin said that Russia has "considerably expanded cooperation with the armed forces of other regions" and that "39 new agreements on military cooperation have been signed with states in the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Latin America"⁶. Russia has thus drawn closer to countries such as Chile, Brazil, Argentina and Bolivia. Today, the main clients of the Russian industrial-military complex are Argentina, Ecuador, Brazil, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Uruguay.

Moreover, in order to extend its network of influence on the continent, Russia has pursued a policy of constant adaptation to the political and economic contexts of the countries with which it intended to develop industrial-military cooperation and export its equipment. In fact, beyond material cooperation, Russia has gradually presented itself as a model for the use of armed forces, described as "an exporter of security mechanisms to Latin American countries"⁷ thanks to its network extended to most of the security services in the region. In 2019, as Chilean civil society protested against Sebastian Pinera, representatives of the Russian armed forces were mobilized in the city of Valparaiso to share their internal crisis management experience with their Chilean counterparts.

Thus, Russia cooperates with the major countries in the region. Nevertheless, although the United States is engaged in a greater strategic influence struggle with China in the region, it would seem that the military-technical links established by Russia in the South American

⁶ Andrei Piatakov, "Cooperacion entre rusia y Argentina en el ambito tecnico-militar", Instituto de Latinoamerica e la Academia de Ciencias de Rusia

⁷ Andrei Piatakov, "Russia and Latin America in the XXI century ...", op.cit



continent remain a source of concern for the American giant, the leading arms exporter for its neighbors.

A threat to North American influence?

Despite the end of the Cold War, Russian-American rivalries remain in various areas. When Vladimir Putin came to power at the head of the Russian Federation, he pursued an active and ambitious foreign policy of rapprochement with many areas of the globe, including Latin America and the Caribbean. Initially, Moscow approached states that would bring it geopolitical benefits that could be used to regain its position as a world power. The rapprochement with Latin America was therefore developed against a background of assertive anti-Americanism, while taking care not to be equated with the communist ideology of the former Soviet Union.

While most Latin American countries distanced themselves from the North American imperialist, both Latin America and the Caribbean and the Russian Federation shared a common vision of rejecting a unipolar world dominated by the United States and advocating a multipolar world, marked by the assertion of South⁸ American countries on the international scene. The United States has therefore always felt a certain hostility towards Russia. In 2017, the U.S. National Security Strategy accuses Russia of seeking only to expand its network of military influence and arms sales to the entire region and of supporting the Venezuelan and Cuban governments. Perceived as a source of regional and global destabilization, the United States has gradually developed a sanctions regime against Russia, the repercussions of which have sometimes been felt in military-technical cooperation with Latin American countries. Indeed, in 2017, the US Congress passed the law to "Counter America's Adversaries through Sanctions" (CAATSA), translated into the implementation of sanctions against countries that purchased arms from Russian companies. This decision influenced Russia's military-technical relations with Peru and Mexico. A major buyer of Russian helicopters, the Peruvian military apparatus would count nearly 100 units, mobilized in particular in the fight against terrorism. The *Russian Helicopters* company, the main intermediary between Moscow and Lima for the sale of the units, has been impacted by the CAATSA law, a vector of difficulties between the two nations; out of caution against the United States, Peru has preferred to reorient itself towards a

⁸ Arantxa Tirado and Félix Caballero Escalante, *"Rusia en America Latina ..."*, op.cit,



Belarusian company. In February 2020, Mexico also distanced itself by refusing to buy a batch of Russian⁹ helicopters.

Nevertheless, it is not certain that Russia represents a major danger to the influence of the United States. If it is true that it stands out by its material proposals almost systematically accompanied by offset proposals to meet the needs of Latin American countries, China could represent a much greater threat than Russia for American interests.

Moreover, as mentioned above, Russia intends to expand the actors of military-technical cooperation by getting closer to the majority of countries in the region, especially Argentina, whose challenges facing its industrial-military complex seem to be of growing interest to Russia.

The Russian-Argentine military-technical rapprochement: a symbol of Russian military strategy in the region?

Although Argentina was one of the first Latin American countries to recognize the Russian Federation diplomatically, bilateral relations have long been limited to the commercial and economic spheres. The intensification of technical-military relations between the two countries is due to the strategic objectives pursued by the Russian Federation in the region, as well as the need for Argentina to renew its military apparatus. Indeed, if Argentina has several national industrialists, both terrestrial, air and naval, the potential of its military-industrial complex is largely reduced by the economic difficulties that the country has faced for many years¹⁰.

The first steps in bilateral cooperation were really felt during the presidency of Nestor Kirchner. In 2004, during the latter's visit to Moscow, the two countries signed an agreement, ratified in 2006, which established bilateral technical-military cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Argentina, ranging from the export and sale of arms, the development of joint scientific research to create and produce new military equipment, and the provision of Russian assistance to support the development of local Argentine companies

⁹ Andrei Piatakov, "Russia and Latin America in the XXI century ...", op.cit

¹⁰ Op.cit,



dedicated to the maintenance and servicing of weapons and equipment acquired from Russia. Still in force today, this agreement defines the legal framework of their bilateral relationship.

The Russian Federation has, in this sense, begun a relative promotion of its military equipment. In 2006, when discussions for the production of Russian helicopters and patrol boats in Argentina were not successful due to the lack of a sufficient Argentine budget, the Russian state agency, *Rosoboronexport*, organized an exhibition to present its military systems and equipment (especially radars and helicopters), an event covered by most Argentine¹¹ media.

In addition, during the 2000s, Russia assisted Argentina and supported its modernization effort. In fact, in 2007, when the icebreaker *Almirante Irizar* -the main vessel mobilized by Argentina for the summer resupply campaigns in Antarctica- was declared out of service due to a fire, Russia provided logistical support to the Latin American nation to guarantee the resupply of Argentine scientific bases on the white continent. In 2007, Russia lent its propulsion ship *Vasily Golovin*, and in 2008, the icebreaker *Capitan Dranitsin* supported the campaigns.

This intervention by Russia responds to the strategic stakes that Antarctica represents for the Eastern power and to which we will return later.

Moreover, in 2010, during the visit of President Dmitry Medvedev to Argentina, *Rosoboronexport* representatives and the Argentine Minister of Defense signed the first official contract for the sale of military equipment with the purchase by Argentina of two Mi-171E helicopters, for 20 million euros, including training and education of crews and maintenance personnel. These two helicopters were used for campaigns in Antarctica and for rescue missions, before being grounded for maintenance.

Gradually, Russia seems to be presenting itself as a possible strategic ally, but above all, as a potentially viable partner for the renewal of the Argentine military apparatus, a major challenge for the national¹² army.

¹¹ Andrei Piatakov, "Cooperacion entre rusia y Argentina ...", Op.cit,

¹² Cf, <https://www.zona-militar.com/2021/05/24/proyectos-militares-argentinos-a-la-espera-de-una-definicion-vcbr-helicopteros-y-cazas/>



The Argentinean capacity deficit: an opportunity for Russia

The prospects for cooperation between the two countries must be analyzed in the light of the necessary and inevitable modernization of Argentina's military apparatus, which is equipped with obsolete technology in the face of the evolution of foreign armies and new threats.

This capability deficit seems to be maintained by economic resources that are too limited and a budget that is far too low for defense. These issues seem to have been successfully analyzed by the Russian Alexander Khramchikhin, who stated that "since the Falklands War, the Argentine armed forces have been in a state of permanent degeneration."¹³ Thus, year after year, the Russian Federation seems to stand out from Argentina's traditional (Western) partners by adapting its technical-military offers to the political and economic developments of the South American nation. In 2008, the two countries developed the Russian-Argentine Intergovernmental Commission on technical-military cooperation, defining the two major axes of cooperation, namely the intensification of exchanges/purchases in terms of military technology as well as the joint production of equipment for military use.

If the presidency of Mauricio Macri did not bring significant changes on the bilateral technical-military cooperation, the election of Alberto Fernandez, the appointment of the new Minister of Defense, Agustin Rossi, and the establishment of a specific fund dedicated to the modernization of the armies (FONDEF) seem to have strengthened the mutual interest of both nations.

Today, Russia presents itself as a commercial and industrial partner capable of responding to the global challenges of the Argentine military-industrial complex, including the modernization of its fleet of wheeled armored vehicles, the renewal of the fleet of fighter aircraft following the cessation of the use of Mirages in 2015, as well as the modernization of the Argentine submarine fleet, devoid of operational submarines and capable of going into full immersion since the tragedy of the sinking of the ARA San Juan in 2017. Thus, from 17 to 19 February 2021, on the occasion of the VII Intergovernmental Commission for Russian-

¹³ Op.cit



Argentine Military-Technical Cooperation in Buenos Aires, the two nations formally addressed the Russian¹⁴ proposals.

The majority of the negotiations focused on the renewal of the air fleet of fighter aircraft. Indeed, after the Falklands war and the victory of Great Britain over Argentina, the latter had real difficulties in acquiring new fighter aircraft due to the British embargo, which led to a permanent abortion of Argentine ambitions due to the presence of British components in the aircraft it coveted¹⁵.

Thus, Russia would offer units of Mig 29M/M2, Mig 35 (modernized version of Mig29) as well as Su-30 and Yak-130 training aircraft. The offer would be based on a bipartite agreement in which Russia would commit to providing logistical support to Argentina in exchange for a total delegation of the maintenance of the aircraft to the national aeronautical company FADEA¹⁶. Although the Russian aircraft are in direct competition with the Chinese-Pakistani JF-17, Argentina has nonetheless issued a formal request to Russia for financing for the possible acquisition of 10 Mig-35s and 2 Mig-35Ds¹⁷. In addition, Russia has proposed the sale of several units of its Orlan-10E¹⁸ drone to reinforce surveillance and reconnaissance missions. Argentina also took advantage of these meetings to re-launch negotiations for the acquisition of at least one additional Mi-171E helicopter to reinforce the means deployed in Antarctica to meet Argentina's strategic needs and to make up for the deficit linked to the maintenance of the two other grounded units.

While the modernization of the air fleet remains the focus of bilateral interests, Russia is also a partner for the renewal of equipment for the Army (30 BTR-82A, 1 BTR-80K and 1 BREM-K) and the Navy (AMUR 1650 submarine). However, several offers remain at the negotiation stage and have not yet been formally proposed, particularly with regard to discussions for the purchase of a submarine. Moreover, while Russia stands out by systematically proposing offset exchanges in addition to equipment sales, as well as advantageous and less expensive financing offers, it has to face several competitors, sometimes favored by Argentina with regard to long-term maintenance costs and different production

¹⁴ Cf, <https://www.infobae.com/politica/2021/02/17/agustin-rossi-se-reunio-con-una-delegacion-rusa-para-fortalecer-la-cooperacion-entre-paises-y-recibir-equipamiento-para-el-ejercito/>

¹⁵ Cf, <http://psk.blog.24heures.ch/archive/2021/01/25/avions-de-combat-l-argentine-en-discussion-avec-la-russie%C2%A0-870457.html>

¹⁶ Cf, <https://defensasur.com.ar/index.php/americadel-sur/116-argentina/14051-la-federacion-de-rusia-ofrece-cazas-mig-35-a-la-fuerza-aerea-argentina>

¹⁷ See <https://www.zona-militar.com/2021/05/05/la-argentina-realiza-el-pedido-de-cotizacion-formal-por-mig-35/>

¹⁸ <https://www.zona-militar.com/2021/03/17/contacto-entre-el-ministerio-de-defensa-y-el-stc-ruso-por-drones-de-reconocimiento/>



standards. Thus, it would seem that on the armored vehicles side, Argentina is heading towards an agreement with the Brazilian IVECO for the purchase of its 6x6 Guarani, which is favored over the Russian, American and Chinese¹⁹ candidates.

Moreover, while cooperation with Russia could be a significant factor in the modernization of Argentina's military sector, it has geopolitical and strategic implications that go beyond the framework of cooperation in the field of defense.

The geopolitical and strategic stakes of the Russian-Argentinian techno-military rapprochement

It is certain that the cooperation and potential intensification of industrial relations between the two nations goes beyond the bilateral relationship. According to Edgardo Aguilera²⁰, the purchase of military equipment and its use in the national arsenal implies the sharing of a similar vision of the world and its conflicts in the use of the equipment, as well as the development of international alliances with the country that promotes the equipment sold. In fact, through the military programs with Argentina, Russia would seek to "build interpersonal relations of friendship and camaraderie with defense officials and senior state officials in order to increase military access in the region."²¹

Before analyzing more specifically the geopolitical stakes of this relationship, it is appropriate to return to the mutual support of the two nations, particularly on the issue of the Falklands War for Argentina, and the Crimea for Russia, disputes that involved a positioning vis-à-vis other international powers.

Indeed, the Falklands War, which pitted Argentina against Great Britain for sovereignty over the Falkland Islands, took place in the international context of the Cold War. Initially anti-communist and led by a military junta supported by the United States, Argentina paradoxically received symbolic support from Russia. Indeed, the United States, after having tried to mediate within the framework of the UN, finally gave its support to Great Britain, a long-time ally, by

¹⁹ Cf, <https://www.zona-militar.com/2021/06/27/finalizan-las-pruebas-del-6x6-guarani-en-la-argentina/>

²⁰ Cf, <https://www.ambito.com/politica/rusia/cumbre-buenos-aires-cooperacion-militar-n5170376>

²¹ Ibid



providing missiles that contributed to the rout of the Argentinean fleet. Thus, this would have benefited from information on the positioning of the British troops thanks to information gathered by the satellites of the Soviet Union according to information transmitted by the former Russian ambassador in Buenos Aires. Faced with the impossibility of providing operational support to Argentina on the ground, Russia took advantage of this confrontation as a symbolic demonstration of its power relationship with the United States. Moreover, even after the resolution of the war and the victory of the British, Russia supported Argentina's territorial ambitions for sovereignty over the Falklands. In 2012, Yuri Paniev, secretary of the Commission for Russian Foreign Relations, said that Russia "had always stood by the country" in its national approach and at the United Nations.

For its part, Argentina, and more specifically President Cristina Kirchner, supported the Russian Federation on the issue of Crimea by condemning the referendum on the status of Crimea, which it considered Russian territory in the same way as it claimed the Falklands as Argentine territory. Argentina has thus positioned itself against the international sanctions regime put in place against Russia on this issue.

Thus, the two nations have repeatedly condemned the West's positioning on these two issues, a positioning interpreted as an ideological alignment of the two countries.

However, this periodic support must be recontextualized in the current geopolitical context. The Russian strategy of rapprochement with certain Latin American countries, notably Argentina, through military-technical cooperation responds to a purely strategic and ideological objective of reaffirming the power of the nation in a region where the influence of the United States, although less flagrant today, is important and claimed by the American giant. In fact, Russia seems to want to ensure an extraterritorial influence in order to guarantee its energy and strategic interests for the years to come, notably for the future exploitation of natural resources in Antarctica or in the fields of space and nuclear technology. Argentina, by its geographical position and its international positioning, could therefore be of great interest to Russia.

Indeed, in view of the strategic stakes that the white continent represents, if Russia seems for the moment to be devoted to the Arctic, the latter has reserved the right to claim the territories discovered by the Russians when the Antarctic Treaty lapses (scheduled for 2048) signed in 1959 and which prohibits all use and exploitation of scientific bases for military purposes and all nuclear tests. In fact, maintaining friendly relations and contributing to the resupply of Argentinean bases would allow Russia to have support in the region. Beyond the logistical support mentioned earlier during the fire of the Argentinean icebreaker *Almirante Irizar*, the two countries had developed a "polar cooperation program" notably under the



presidency of Mauricio Macri, translated by the use of Russian IL-76 airplanes for the delivery by air of cargoes to Argentinean²² scientific bases

Also, while Argentina plans to develop an Antarctic logistics hub through the construction of an integrated naval base in Ushuaia, Russia has offered its cooperation to the project, as has China.

Contributing to the Argentine project would be a symbolic sign from Russia in the face of the Chinese and American powers. However, for the time being, Russia seems more interested in developing a program of outer space cooperation through the construction of space bases on Argentine territory, as well as the development of nuclear power plants.

In 2010, Argentina and Russia signed a memorandum of cooperation for the operation and development of the Russian satellite system GLONASS in Argentina. This agreement was deepened in 2015 by the signing between the National Commission for Space Activities of Argentina and the Russian Federal Space Agency *Roskosmos* to strengthen the memorandum of 2010: 20 agreements were signed establishing the cooperation of both nations for the exploitation of outer space for peaceful purposes.

On October 8, 2019, Mauricio Macri's Argentina signed a space cooperation agreement with Russia, which has raised many concerns in recent months. Ratified by Russia in December 2020, then Argentina on January 4, 2021, without consultation of parliamentarians, it provides for the installation of a Russian²³ space base, for the exploitation of satellites and space data for peaceful purposes only. However, given the international position of Russia as well as the presence of a Chinese space base in Patagonia in the province of Neuquén, Russia is suspected of wanting, in the long term, to use the station for espionage and military purposes in the eventuality of Russia entering a space war.

Russia also seems to want to extend its nuclear power to Argentina. While an agreement for the construction of a nuclear power plant was signed in 2008, Moscow's ambitions in this field have been represented to Alberto Fernandez' Argentina in recent months. According to information gathered from the Russian ambassador in Argentina, Russia would have the ambition to develop a large nuclear power plant on the national territory, several medium-sized reactors as well as a floating nuclear power plant, a project that seems to worry the Uruguayan²⁴ neighbor.

²² Andrei Piatakov, "Russia and Latin America in the XXI century ...", op.cit

²³ Cf, https://www.clarin.com/politica/acuerdo-putin-rusia-instale-base-rusa-satelital-pais_0_Q3Jmi70dO.html

²⁴ Cf, <https://www.perfil.com/noticias/actualidad/alerta-uruguay-posible-central-nuclear-flotante-rusa-argentina.phtml>



This Russian ambition for nuclear technology as well as the rapid and silent ratification of the space agreement by Argentina seems to respond to the global strategy developed by Russia in connection with the current health crisis, namely, "vaccine diplomacy". In fact, according to the journalist Jorge Lanata, the involvement of Russia in the management of the Argentinean health crisis and the sale of vaccines at a lower cost would respond to the policy of "give and take" carried out by Moscow which, through this health aid, aims to achieve its geopolitical objectives much more pragmatic in the region²⁵.

Thus, the intensification of relations between Argentina and Russia in the military-technical field undeniably has geopolitical stakes for both parties. Despite the end of the cold war, the Russian-American rivalry remains when it comes to defending its strategic interests beyond national borders. The United States continually expresses its reluctance to the Russian presence and the intensification of military relations with the region, particularly with Argentina.

²⁵ Cf, <https://www.infobae.com/politica/2021/06/14/rusia-busca-avanzar-con-la-instalacion-de-centrales-nucleares-de-alta-potencia-en-argentina/>



Conclusion

After being marked by the fall of the Soviet Union, Vladimir Putin's Russia has pursued a policy of intense rapprochement with Latin American countries.

While the military-technical relations between Russia and the Latin American continent seem to be the nerve of Russian foreign policy for many years in the region, Moscow's weight remains to be qualified. Indeed, if it maintains military relations with the majority of the countries of the continent, the nature of this cooperation does not seem to pursue offensive objectives, but rather responds to the will of each country to resolve its national challenges. In addition, the majority of agreements and cooperation projects between the Russian Federation and Latin American countries are of short duration. In 2016, if Russia affirmed, through its foreign policy doctrine, to intensify as much as possible its relations with Latin American and Caribbean states, it is more a "ground for demonstrating its extra-regional geopolitical claims" challenging the hegemony of the United States in the region, than a real theater of the Russian-American competition.

Moreover, it seems important to emphasize that the majority of military equipment in Latin American and Caribbean countries comes from European, American or Israeli companies, with production standards that differ from those of Russia. This issue could therefore be a limit to the intensification of relations with Russia, especially for Argentina. Indeed, acquiring Russian equipment and then ensuring the production of these devices on national territory will have a considerable cost in terms of the maintenance of armaments and the training of personnel and military personnel to the new production standard.

Russia could stand out in the field of atomic energy cooperation. Indeed, it has competitive advantages over China and the United States. While the latter have no interest in promoting cooperation in this field in order to maintain the nations' dependence on American technologies, China focuses mainly on infrastructure maintenance.

Finally, while relations between Russia and Latin American countries are not expected to undergo major changes in the coming years, "Russia's ability to realize its declared strategic convergence with Latin America will depend less on itself than on the position of the other two players."²⁶

²⁶ Andrei Piatakov, "Russia and Latin America in the XXI century ...", op.cit