

world economy and grant the region greater prominence in relation to international institutions, which reflect an archaic world order.

In the area of foreign relations, another challenge to strategic integration is the Pacific Alliance. Established on June 6, 2012, it links Colombia, Chile, Mexico, and Peru—countries that have shown a greater rapprochement than others with the United States and have signed bilateral free-trade treaties with it under conditions imposed by Washington, including changing laws on investment, intellectual property, labor rights, and environmental protection. The alliance is being introduced as a wedge among the mechanisms of strategic regionalism, and it is forcing the other countries of the UNASUR to block attempts to expand it.

Another challenge to these efforts at integration and cooperation is the preponderant role in each of these mechanisms of a single country, in the case of the ALBA Venezuela and in the case of the UNASUR Brazil. The unequal distribution and lack of balance among the ALBA countries, with Venezuela leading the process and the Caribbean countries playing a marginal role, has been accompanied by a pronounced presidentialism. In addition, a change in the make-up of the congress and the election of a president supported by the current opposition could put this important project at serious risk. With regard to the UNASUR, the growing political, economic, financial, technological, and military influence of Brazil as an emerging power with other countries of the BRICS has meant that many of the initiatives it promotes are functional to the geopolitical vision and interests of the South American giant.

Marini (1977) used the concept of "subimperialism" to refer to Brazil's particular situation and its capacity to exercise a relatively autonomous expansionist policy. Recently, various writers have addressed different aspects related to Brazilian subimperialism and globalization (Bueno and Seabra, 2009; Flynn, 2007; Luce, 2011; Tavares, 2011; Zibechi, 2012). The threat of the imposition of an imperialist or subimperialist project in South America must be tackled on several fronts: by the governments of the countries that are part of the UNASUR and perceive the danger of an integration subordinated to the Brazilian geopolitical interests; by those countries' indigenous communities and peasant groups, which are being affected by the strategic integration of Latin America and, particularly, by the UNASUR's Initiative for Integration of the South American Regional Infrastructure (IIRSA), in which Brazilian capital and investments play a fundamental role;<sup>11</sup> and by the social movements, civil-society organizations, and members of Brazilian society in general that seek to bring both investment and the project of Brazilian expansion under popular control.

### BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

A new type of strategic integration such as that being attempted by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean that would make possible a regional repositioning with greater autonomy as part of the global construction of a multipolar and pluricentered world, that distances itself from the dictates of Washington, that is aimed at development that benefits people, and that incorporates the rational control and management of natural resources as one of its

axes of integration is by definition a project in dispute. First, it entails a great practical-theoretical challenge, taking into consideration the serious problems and difficulties that confront the European process of integration that for more than five decades has served as a referent. Second, it must correct the mistakes derived from the fact that such a strategic integration is unprecedented in the region. Third, it must find short-term solutions for the new extractivism, generating policies to take sustainable and rational advantage of natural resources while keeping in mind the strategic role of control of those resources in the current global context, which is characterized by the deterioration of the environment and the search for solutions to the critical problem of climate change at the international level.

The construction and projection of strategic thinking on integration in the region is obligatory in a scenario of conflict, uncertainty, and crisis. In this dilemma, the governments of the Latin American countries may be severely limited in their possibilities for progress unless they incorporate the people into their plans. The creation of new forms of state-society relationships seems to be an Achilles' heel of the new integration, and the need for intense and persistent political effort is clear. Community participation in decision making at all levels is necessary for the construction of a broad network of defense of national and regional projects that enhance the possibility of achieving integration with the strategic vision that we have described.

## NOTES

1. Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Saint Lucia, which joined the ALBA on July 30, 2013.
2. <http://www.bancodelalba.org/>.
3. <http://www.brics6.itamaraty.gov.br/>.
4. Petrocaribe was established with the signing of an agreement for energy cooperation between Venezuela and the following 13 countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Surinam. It increased its membership with the incorporation of Haiti, Nicaragua, and Honduras in 2007 and Guatemala in 2008.
5. The constitutive treaty of the UNASUR was ratified by the member countries on the following dates: Bolivia, March 11, 2009; Ecuador, July 15, 2009; Guyana, February 11, 2010; Venezuela, March 13, 2010; Peru, May 10, 2010; Argentina, June 9, 2010; Chile, November 22, 2010; Surinam, January 9, 2011; Colombia, January 28, 2011; Brazil, July 7, 2011; and Paraguay, August 11, 2011.
6. For a more up-to-date review of the function of each council, see <http://www.unasursg.org/>.
7. The South American School of Defense began operations in April 2014 (see the council's web site, <http://docs.unasursg.org/alfresco/faces/jsp/browse/browse.jsp>).
8. <http://www.ceedcds.org.ar/Espanol/01-CEED/01-Mision.html>.
9. OLADE was created on November 2, 1973, with the Lima Convention, which has been ratified by 27 Latin American countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela, Barbados, Cuba, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Surinam, Trinidad and Tobago, Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama (see <http://www.olade.org.es>).
10. Beijing currently threatens to become a destabilizing factor for Washington in the region by representing an emerging security risk to its interests in the hemisphere, given its active diplomacy in "sensitive" areas such as Cuba, Venezuela, and the Panama Canal (Cardozo, 2007: 2).
11. The IIRSA, which has the objective of developing regional infrastructure projects in the area of transport, energy, and telecommunications, at the end of 2013 had 583 projects representing

more than US\$157.7 billion distributed throughout South America. It has become the focus of condemnation by peasant communities and groups for the severe social and environmental impacts that these projects entail (see <http://www.iirsa.org/>).

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about the more autonomous or dependent character of Latin America will be settled by these outcomes. The dualities of the region cannot become permanent. Ultimately they will tip the scales toward a stormy adaptation to capitalist oppression or a new development of socialism.

## NOTES

1. Remittances have generated a lucrative business for exchange agencies (Western Union, Thomas Cook, MoneyGram). Transfers to developing countries worldwide were more than US\$332 billion in 2010 and US\$372 billion in 2011 and were estimated to reach US\$467 billion by 2014 (*La Nación*, September 24, 2012).

2. The turn implied greater subordination of the national bourgeoisie to foreign capital and the consequent disinclination to implement progressive changes (Santos, 1998).

3. The richest 1 percent receives 31 percent of the income, while the richest 5 percent receive 257 times more than the poorest 5 percent (Brum, 2013; Quijano, 2013).

4. After the conflict over espionage, U.S. corporations were left out of the bidding for the great Libra oilfields and the pro-North American Patriota wing lost ground to the critical Amorim-Figueiredo sector. For two opposing assessments of the aircraft purchase decision, see Borón (2013b) and Zibechi (2013).

5. The massive participation of the electorate in the Venezuelan elections has been decisive and is one great channel for grassroots action, in contrast to the situation in Chile, where much of the population has lost confidence in the utility of the vote.

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**TABLE 1**  
**Chubut Populations, 1947–2010**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Rawson</i>	<i>Biedma</i>
1947	92,456	9,605	4,554
1960	142,412	17,155	6,189
1970	189,735	34,288	6,945
1980	236,116	67,991	21,689
1991	357,189	100,243	45,494
2001	413,237	115,829	58,677
2010	509,108	131,313	82,883

*Source:* National censuses.