

THE RELEVANT WORLD SUMMITS OF 2022

Rosendo Fraga

Director of CARI's Foreign Relations and Armed Forces Committee

In 2022, a series of multilateral Summits will be held, which will be relevant milestones in a strained world. From June 26 to 28, at Elmau Castle in the Bavarian Alps, the G7 Summit will be carried out, bringing together the 7 most developed economies with a democratic system in the world: the United States, Canada, Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Italy. They all support the Biden Administration's policy of polarizing the democracies under his leadership, to confront the "authoritarian" powers, China and Russia.

2022 begins with two strong uncertainties: the tension around Ukraine in Europe and with respect to Taiwan in Asia, and the unfolding of the pandemic, in view of which science serves to mitigate and control, but not to predict. The suspension of the Davos Group meeting - which brings together the global leadership in January annually in said town in the Swiss Alps - less than one month in advance evidences this inability to predict. The G7 Heads of Government will probably be able to articulate a common policy in the face of strategic and geopolitical risks, but the pandemic will be more complex, where the multilateral framework has proven to be weak and most of the responses have been at the national level.

Almost in parallel, on June 29 and 30 the NATO Summit will be held in Madrid. This organization is made up of all G7 countries except Japan. There were 14 countries when the organization was founded in 1949, and today it has expanded to 30. The simultaneity of the two Summits facilitates the presence in both of the Heads of Government of the main Western powers. NATO is at a critical moment due to its confrontation with Russia, precipitated by the migrant crisis between Belarus and Poland, and the extension of the conflict to Ukraine, escalating to Russia and NATO. Many things can happen in the first half of 2022 that could alter the current situation.

The central point is that Russia wants to prevent the extension of the Atlantic Alliance to the former Soviet republics that surround it and the withdrawal of the troops deployed in NATO countries that were members of it when the USSR

was dissolved. Russia has shown its willingness to take the conflict to the military level - invading Ukraine - while NATO refuses to prevent new adhesions if that is the will of the countries that aspire to integrate it.

On September 15 and 16, the Summit of Heads of Government of the Shanghai Group (SCO) takes place in Samarkand (Uzbekistan), the most important in Asia that rivals with the G7 and NATO. This organization is made up and led by the two powers considered "authoritarian" by the West: China and Russia. It was founded by them together with four of the five Central Asian countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (the only one in this subregion that does not integrate it is Turkmenistan).

In the second decade of the 21st century, two key Asian powers were incorporated: India and Pakistan (both have nuclear weapons). In 2020, the incorporation of Iran took place, with which the Group's Asian projection incorporated the Middle East. It is a Group that was created and developed with priority on international security issues, over economic and commercial ones. It has permanent structures linked to the first matter. In fact, the central issue will be the Group's position in the face of the crisis involving the presence and role of the United States in Ukraine, threatening Russia, and supporting Taiwan vis-à-vis China. But in the eight months until this Summit meets, many events and situations will surely take place at the international level.

From October 30 to 31, the G20 Heads of Government Summit will take place on the island of Bali, in Indonesia. This Summit of Heads of Government is held annually, like the previous three. It brings together those who preside over the G7 countries, also the emerging powers (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and 7 more medium-sized countries, which to some extent represent regions: Mexico, Argentina, South Korea, Australia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia. The European Union joins them as member number 20. It is a Group that has played an economic-financial role, especially in managing the 2008 crisis, but in the face of the pandemic, it showed limitations in doing so. Security issues have not been a priority at the Summits of this group, because the antagonism between great powers (the United States and its European allies on the one hand, and China and Russia on the other) hinders consensus on this matter.

The Summits of Heads of Government of the emerging powers that make up the BRICS, and that of the Pacific countries that are part of APEC, also gain relevance. The emerging powers mentioned above will hold their XIV Summit, which will take place in China and will be chaired by Xi Jinping. It is a Group that has had more political than economic roles, and where security issues have generally been absent. The participation of China, Russia and India highlights the role of Asia in the emerging world. Brazil, for Latin America, and South Africa for Africa, have a role of regional representation.

This Summit is also held annually. APEC, which will hold its Summit in Thailand in November, is made up of 21 countries with a coastline on the Pacific Ocean and reflects the growing importance it has acquired, compared to centuries during which the Atlantic was the hub of international trade. West and East converge in this Group. The American continent is part of the United States, Canada, Mexico, Peru and Chile; from Oceania, Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. Two key allies of the United States are part of Asia: Japan and South Korea.

China is also part. Emerging Asian economies such as Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand are in APEC, which are among the competing interests of China and the United States. Russia is also part. It is completed by Singapore and Brunei. It is a Group that has focused on economic issues, given the membership of the United States and China, which makes it difficult to advance on political or strategic issues.

In conclusion: the G7 Summit that takes place at the end of June in Germany will focus on tensions with Russia and China and the unfolding of the pandemic; the meeting of the NATO Heads of Government, which is held almost simultaneously, will deal with the confrontation with Russia, which is its central problem; the Shanghai Group Summit - an equivalent to the G7 but from Asia - meets in Uzbekistan in September and will be dominated by tensions with the West led by China and Russia; the G20 Summit, which takes place at the end of October in Indonesia, will focus on the global economy and the pandemic; the presence of Russia, China and the United States and their allies prevents the discussion of strategic conflicts. Finally, the BRICS (emerging powers) Summit will be held in China, with a focus on the economy and the

pandemic, and the APEC Summit, which takes place in Thailand, will tackle economic and regional issues.