

## **GLOBAL STRUGGLE ONE YEAR AFTER THE INVASION IN UKRAINE**

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One year after the invasion of Ukraine, the United States redoubled its bet, both against Russia and China. The US doctrine qualifies the first as a "threat" and the second as a "challenge". The Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, in recent weeks has expressed that his government has information that China has decided to provide Russia with weapons, given its plight in its supply of ammunition and technological inputs for its advanced systems. Until now, China has limited itself to providing inputs that are used in the manufacture of weapons, but it does not deliver lethal weapons. For the American vision, the Asian power is preparing to cross a "red line". The central point is that Washington escalates both conflicts simultaneously. Problems such as the tension between Japan and China, those generated by North Korea with its experimental launches in the China Sea, generating a threat to both Japan and South Korea, and the conflict of free navigability and sovereignty in the South China Sea, constitute a dangerous arc of tension. According to SIPRI (the specialized center for military spending in Stockholm), what the United States spends on defense is almost three times what China spends. Washington has a military advantage over the Asian power. But it maintains a global deployment, while China's is only regional, which allows it to concentrate its forces more quickly and effectively.

As for Europe, it maintains its alliance with the United States against Russia. No significant conflict has arisen within the EU and the economic problems caused by the decrease in energy purchases from Russia have been overcome. The political decision to maintain ammunition supplies and deliver more modern weapons to Ukraine remains unchanged. But the continuation of the war at an unexpected level and a longer than estimated time is creating difficulties on the European continent to carry out this assistance in the time required by President Zelensky. The artillery ammunition sent to Kyiv is insufficient and will be maintained in the short term. The shipment of modern tanks, which are delivered to only half a dozen countries, encounters increasing logistical difficulties for the armored vehicles to quickly reach Ukraine. But the European Union's defense ministers are meeting in Brussels to try to speed up military

supplies to Ukraine. Zelensky's request to receive modern multirole fighters is currently without a decision. Germany poses the most problematic situation, although it avoids highlighting it. The bitter legacy of World War II makes it reluctant to participate in the military effort. The largest economy in Europe, in turn, is facing difficulties in doubling its military spending in terms of GDP disposed of after the Russian invasion. The controversy that arose over who was responsible for the attack on the Nord Stream submarine gas pipeline, which links Russia with Germany, has generated misgivings and suspicions. The claim that the United States is responsible was made by a Western media outlet and US intelligence media attribute it to a Ukrainian extremist group.

For its part, China responds harshly to the United States, warning that the two powers are marching "on a dangerous path of confrontation." Coinciding with the first anniversary of the war, Beijing presented its 12-point "peace plan" for the conflict, which was received with attention - although without acceptance from Russia and Ukraine - and generated rejection by Washington and Brussels. The speaker of the United States House of Representatives, Kevin McCarthy, expressed his intention to visit Taiwan, as his predecessor, Nancy Pelosi, did in August last year, causing an escalation in the conflict between the United States and China over Taiwan. China's new foreign minister argued that "if the United States does not step on the brakes, and continues to accelerate down the wrong path, nothing will prevent derailment and there will surely be conflict and confrontation," adding that "such competition is a reckless gamble, where what is at stake are the fundamental interests of the two peoples, and even the future of humanity. At the same time, the People's Assembly - the highest political body of the Chinese Communist Party - was held, which validated the re-election of President Xi for a third term, which had not happened since the Mao period. The economy recovers after the lockdown to contain the pandemic and military spending increases significantly, but without ceasing to be close to a third of that of the United States. In this framework, China will try to prevent Russia from being defeated militarily, while being able to benefit from a weaker and more dependent Russian economy.

Russia shows a historical resilience in the face of armed conflicts and Putin is betting that time will play in his favor. A survey carried out by a well-known Russian company -considered independent in the West-, shows that the population's support for the war is 82% one year after the conflict. The Russian

losses are very high, but the Ukrainian ones are even higher. Regarding casualties during the first year of the war, the figures are very different and controversial. But it is clear that, regarding the population, the casualties suffered by Ukraine are between 3 and 4 times those of Russia. Russia's GDP has fallen between 2 and 3%, but Ukraine's has fallen between 30 and 35%. Nearly a million Russians have left the country, most of them from the more highly-skilled population. Ukrainian emigrants total 7 million, plus 6 million who have left their homes. The Russian infrastructure has not been damaged; that of Ukraine is practically destroyed. The Russian military effort has notorious difficulties and resorts to modernizing Cold War military material that was in stock, in the face of growing needs, but the NATO countries also have the need to produce and coordinate. The resolution of the UN Assembly demanding the withdrawal of Russian troops, which was approved by 141 votes, only 7 against and 38 abstentions, made it clear that in this last position there is a group of Asian countries that always avoid condemning Russia: China, India and Pakistan, which have nuclear weapons, are among them. It is becoming increasingly difficult for Moscow to acquire modern technology such as chips, and conflicts between the Armed Forces and mercenaries are growing. But for now Putin's stability has no risks ahead.

In conclusion: one year after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the United States remains firm in its support for this country and at the same time dangerously escalates tension with China; it responds harshly, stating that the situation implies great risks not only for the two powers, but for all of humanity, at the same time that President Xi is re-elected for a third term. Europe maintains its support for the Ukrainian cause and its military alliance with the United States, but suffers from tensions such as those generated with Germany. Lastly, Russia's historical resilience in the face of war leads Putin to believe that time is playing in its favor, but problems such as the lack of technology and clashes between the armed forces and mercenaries are growing.