

International security: Mexico's challenges and what the future holds



In the context of a **new government in Mexico** and **elections** in the **United States**, the present brings **new challenges to the global agenda**, agreed the participants at the forum “**Mexico and International Security.**”

According to [Gabriel Aguilera](#), Regional Dean of the School of Social Sciences and Government, while it is true that this is a time of **important changes**, it also presents **unique opportunities for the country**.

*“**International security issues** occupy a prominent place in the political and media discussion (...) This implies **adopting a broader view**,”* said Edna Jaime, National Dean of the ECSG.

*“If what we’re **looking for is hope**, perhaps that’s where we’ll find it (...) from the voices of these people, whose perspectives could be heard and applied in the country’s strategy and **planning for the future**,”* Aguilera said.

The second edition of this forum, held at [Tec de Monterrey](#), brought together academics, decision makers, opinion leaders, and specialists.

International security through a Mexican lens

At the **opening ceremony**, Jaime was accompanied by **Hans Blomeier**, Director of the [Konrad Adenauer Foundation](#) in Mexico, and **Christian Ehrlich**, Director of the [Institute for Strategy and Defense Research](#) (ISDR).

During the forum's inauguration, the Dean highlighted the collaboration between **Tec de Monterrey**, the **Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Mexico**, and the **Institute for Strategy & Defense Research** as coordinators of the meeting.

*"It's very important that we make an effort to understand the **international security** issue from a **Mexican perspective**,"* Jaime said.

Blomeier said that, in addition to the vision shared by Aguilar, a **distinctive feature of this edition** was its ability to bring together speakers who, in addition to **opening dialogue among diverse age groups**, also highlighted the role of marginalized issues and groups.

*"This is an **interdisciplinary dialogue between experts**, but it's also an **intergenerational dialogue**,"* he said.

Christian Ehrlich, a Tec graduate in Political Science, concluded by pointing out that since we are living in the **era of the "end" of certainties**, **it is the responsibility of all of us as a society to build new ones**, starting from the present.

*"This is an **interdisciplinary dialogue of experts**, but it's also an **intergenerational dialogue**".- Hans Blomeier*



/> width="900" loading="lazy"> **Approaching security from an economic perspective**

During the *International Political Economy* panel, Faculty of Excellence professor **Sebastian Mazzuca** was joined by Monterrey campus research professor **Mariana Rangel**, along with the Regional Dean.

*"Beyond sharing a thesis with you, **this is a provocation**,"* Mazzuca said, challenging both his colleagues and the audience, explaining how the global security and economic landscape bring **major geopolitical changes**.

*"**Countries have expired as geographical units** because of two key problems, their scale and their combinations (...) And what will follow them? We're already looking at a proposal for **city networks**,"* the professor said.

For her part, Rangel pointed out the role of the **Mexican economy within the current global scenario** and its conflicts, pointing out the stagnation the country has experienced, alongside the **unequal flow of foreign investment and lack of alliances**.

*"I see two strategies that Mexico can take, one through the **intervention and development of key sectors** such as clean energy and pharmaceuticals, and the other through **alliances** and models such as **friendshoring**,"* she said.

Friendshoring is an economic and geopolitical strategy in which a country decides to move its manufacturing, production, or supply chain operations to allied countries.

Aguilera also pointed out the importance of **adopting a new viewpoint to address international security**, noting that a country's wealth is not necessarily equivalent to its power.

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On the cusp of the advent of a new world order

Security (CISS) at the [Bundeswehr University of Munich](#), affirmed the **current transition to a new international landscape**.

*"We're **in the midst of a battle for a new world order**, but it's not a fight between **democracies** and **autocracies** but between the status quo countries or powers and the revisionists,"* he said.

The academic pointed out that although there are experts who foresee a **new multipolar configuration** of the international system, he sees the **arrival of a bipolar order** (China and the US) or a **unipolar** one (the US) as more feasible.

Masala also explained how the **concept of power has evolved beyond arms races and military power**. People now talk about geopolitical control of markets and technological innovation.

*"This gives more room for **regional leaders to exist**, particularly **emerging markets such as Mexico and Brazil**, even within a uni- or bipolar world"* he said on the panel *International Security: Chaos and Uncertainty*.

Finally, the specialist reflected on the **role of globalization**, expressing the current debate between the **benefits of openness** that compete with the generation of **dependency ties**.



Multidimensional security with a gender perspective

On the *Women and International Security* panel, moderator **Giovanna Villalobos** from ISDR Mexico opened the discussion on the **global security agenda from and for women**.

This panel included **Sandra Sandu**, from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Moldova; **Isabella Cota**, investigative journalist at El País; and **Magdalena Alcocer**, Graduate Coordinator at Anáhuac University.

To mark the 24th anniversary of the UN Women, Peace, and Security Agenda, the panelists highlighted how **conflicts affect women differently with asymmetrical impacts**.

*“We have to remember that **women’s work and lives are just as valuable as men’s,**”* said Cota, stressing the need for **local legislation that protects women on multiple fronts**.

Both Alcocer and Sandu emphasized the **role of civil society as mediators and “watchdogs”** for the fulfillment of the peace agenda that concerns both the protection of women and their development.

*“(From civil society) we can **shape, monitor, and sustain national policies related to security and see that they empower women and protect our society,**”* Sandu said.

North America, crisis, and opportunities for the region

For academic **Raúl Benítez**, research professor at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), the North American region can be understood as **the economies of three countries**: the US, Mexico, and Canada, **linked by large differences that separate them**.

*“In security matters, both Canada and the United States give priority to the global, while **Mexico has a paralyzing and ambiguous discourse**,”* said the professor.

*“We need to **assume responsibilities according to the size of the country we are**,”* he said.

In defense, Benítez clarified that there is currently **no tri-national agenda, but two binational ones** with the US acting as the “center” of both strategies, one based on the Northern Command and the other restricted to drug trafficking.

*“Being well located geographically and commercially is a necessary but insufficient condition for the country. **We need to build an internal policy of consensus in accordance with global conflict and our location**,”* he concluded.

Among wars and alliances, the future of the European region

Robert Papp, Regional Director of the Tec’s Department of Political Science and International Relations, joined **Carlo Masala** to discuss the future of the **European bloc in a landscape of armed conflict**.

With **Blomeier** serving as moderator, the professors expressed a **shared concern about the apparent rise of populism** and extreme right-wing parties on the continent, generating internal divisions.

*“We’re returning to a scenario more like that of the last century, in which **European integration is primarily about a common market, not a political or judicial unity**,”* Masala said.

For his part, Papp expressed his concern about the **return of armed conflicts in the region**, particularly the war in Ukraine, which could completely change Europe if it escalates.

*“It only takes one misdirected missile or provocation from the Balkans to Russia to **escalate the conflict to a level we haven’t witnessed yet**,”* the Director said.

Papp also pointed out how **European identity and growing nationalism** in certain countries can **hinder the cooperation process**, which Masala believes will require a re-evaluation by the region’s stakeholders.

Reflection on the South American outlook and its influence

Patrick Paterson, Associate Dean at the [National Defense University](#) in Washington, D.C., and **Oscar Palma**, professor at the [University of the Rosary in Colombia](#) approached the **South American scenario** from two perspectives.

From Paterson’s perspective, **climate change is the greatest security risk for the region** due to the impact of issues such as global warming on the societies of this bloc.

*“Small countries suffer greatly from the effects of emissions from more developed countries (...) It’s a **transnational threat with no respect for borders**,” the Dean said.*

The effects of these problems in turn have an impact on **vulnerable populations**, resulting in an **increase in forced migratory displacements, food security crises**, among others.

For his part, Palma approached the South American bloc from the perspective of studying the case of **Colombia as a NATO global partner** and its implications in terms of **regional security**.

*“Whether or not this is a **threat to the region** will really depend on the **narratives constructed by the actors** at political junctures (...) However, it must be understood that there are clear limits to this alliance,” he said.*



Defense industry nearshoring models

Emilio Cadena, General Director of Prodensa, moderated the panel on nearshoring, thinking specifically in terms of the **military defense industry** and focusing on the **potential of emerging markets**.

Íñigo Guevara, Director of [Janes Strategic Services](#) and professor at [Georgetown University](#); and **Roberto Durán**, research professor at the Tec’s School of Government and Public Transformation, participated as speakers in this discussion.

*“In terms of manufacturing and being able to count on defense technology, it’s **not only acquiring this equipment, but producing it locally,**”* said Guevara.

*“The world is subject to forces beyond the economic, political, environmental, etc. that can **disrupt trade patterns** (...) After the pandemic, we realized that borders do matter,”* Durán added.

The latter identified four integration models that can be explored in the new global landscape, the first being **reshoring**, the second **nearshoring**, the third **allyshoring** and, finally, **replication**.

As part of this line of thought, the expert sees **potential in the ally or friendshoring model**, which in turn seeks to create **strategic alliances based on common ideologies and values**.

The 2024 International Security Forum

Mexico and International Security is the second edition of this roundtable discussion among more than 15 academic specialists, decision makers, and more on the **exploration of the topic beyond the absence of war**.

According to Aguilera, Tec de Monterrey’s School of Social Sciences and Government is **proud to be part of this advocacy and to host the event**, adding to the discussion from Mexico.

*“It’s important to open up to a **broader scope for understanding these issues** with the support and voices from contexts that are different from our own and with a wide variety of perspectives,”* said Aguilar.

The Dean points out how this **diversity of topics and perspectives is the most relevant differentiator** in this year’s forum, highlighting the participation of young people in these spaces.

*“Talking from the perspective of and about the marginalized, such as young people and women, is fundamental, because we have to ask ourselves **who has suffered the most as a result of the crisis of violence and wars**,* Aguilar said in an interview.

*“These kinds of spaces help to understand how international **security issues** really impact populations in **very tangible ways**, and that’s something that concerns all of us,”* he added.

The forum was held on October 30 and 31 in the Main Hall of the Rector’s Building on the Tec’s Monterrey campus.

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