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Resurrecting outdated Monroe Doctrine reflects Washington's entrenched backyard thinking

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Ahead of his visit to Latin America, U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Thursday that Washington's Monroe Doctrine "clearly has been a success" and "is as relevant today as it was the day it was written" in 1823.

The doctrine was first put forward to drive Europeans away from the region almost two centuries ago. With such an interventionist foreign policy, Washington officially staked out its backyard.

In 2013, then U.S. President [Barack Obama](#) announced that the era of the Monroe Doctrine had ended and predicted a new relationship with Latin America featuring equal rights. Today, with Tillerson's remarks, the Trump administration is signaling that it wants to resurrect the obsolete foreign policy.

Over the past year, U.S. President Donald Trump has brandished a big stick against Cuba and Venezuela. His government has abandoned a rapprochement with Cuba and issued a series of sanctions against Venezuela with the purpose of promoting a change of government in the country.

Ever since the doctrine was first formulated, the [United States](#) has sought to control and manipulate the region through direct and indirect interventions, and to

extract huge resources and wealth from local countries.

To guarantee its almost absolute control over the continent, Washington has, over the past two centuries, carried out a host of military interventions in the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Panama, Cuba, Chile, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Haiti.

Many historians and critics have observed that "Americans" in the phrase "America for the Americans" is limited to "the United States."

The region's excessive dependence on the United States neither brought it prosperity nor security, and this explains why the region has decided to expand its relations, both economic and political ones, to other countries in the world, to reduce such dependence and seek a greater integration into the wider international community.

Also in his speech delivered hours before flying to the region, Tillerson warned Latin American governments of the advance of "predatory" foreign countries. Similarly, over two centuries the Monroe Doctrine aimed to avoid interventions from outside the American continent.

He even labeled China and [Russia](#) as "imperial powers" in Latin America. Such blunt lecturing shows that the Trump [White House](#) still intends to keep Latin America strictly within its sphere of influence. It is like putting up a big sign that says: "Stay away! I own it."

Also, Tillerson's accusations against China are as ridiculous as they are self-defeating.

But Chinese policies, which promote free trade and globalization, including the Belt and Road Initiative, are now offering welcome alternatives for Latin America.

China is now a major international buyer of Latin American bulk commodities, and imports more and more agricultural and high value-added products from the region. China's investment in and financial cooperation with Latin American countries are in full accordance with commercial rules and local laws and regulations.

While Beijing is trying to help Latin Americans realize their dream of development and prosperity, Washington is becoming more protectionist against the region, and seeking to resurrect a policy born in the age of colonialism.

To Latin Americans and the world, it is becoming increasingly clear which country is really the imperialist power.

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