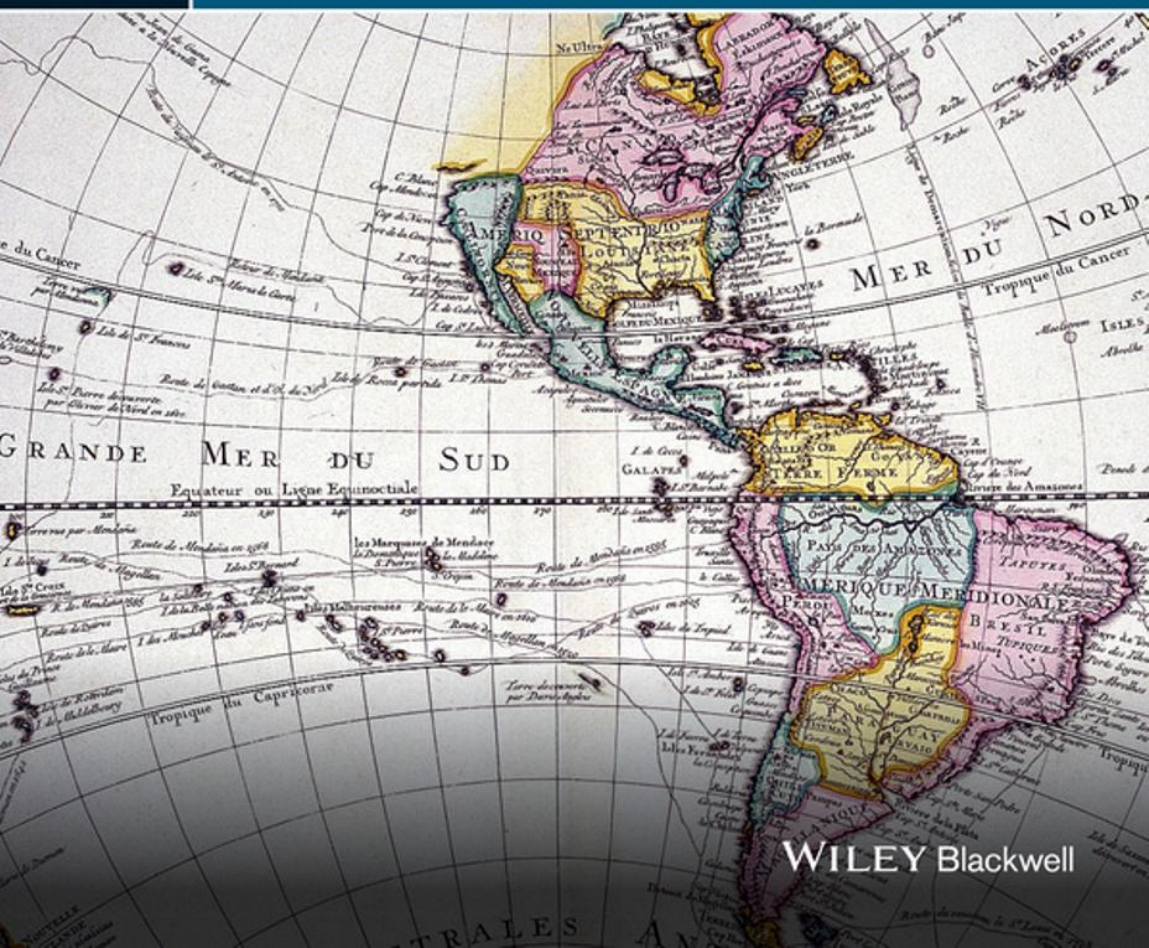


SECOND EDITION

U.S. and Latin American Relations

Gregory B. Weeks



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Second Edition

Gregory B. Weeks

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Preface

Between fiscal years 2013 and 2014, United States Customs and Border Protection reported that the number of unaccompanied children apprehended at the border had risen 88 percent, from 35,209 to 66,127.¹ The number from Central America alone had spiked even more dramatically and by early 2014 it had sparked a media storm. But who or what was to blame? Several members of the United States Congress pointed their fingers directly southward. As one colorfully and angrily put it:

We need to whack them, our neighbors, to understand that they are just not going to keep taking our money and we are just going to be sitting here like this—we're not the ATM machine.²

This sentiment was widely shared by U.S. policy makers. It held that the problem was primarily due to mismanagement in the sending countries, the leaders of which needed prodding—or “whacking”—from the United States to correct the error of their ways.

Not surprisingly, the view in Latin America was quite different. As Honduran president Juan Orlando Hernández put it:

Your country has enormous responsibility for this... The problem of narco-trafficking generates violence, reduces opportunities, generates migration because this [the United States] is where there's the largest consumption of drugs. That's leaving us with such an enormous loss of life.³

Other Central American presidents agreed. Guatemalan President Otto Pérez Molina added that Central America had suffered for years because of U.S. Cold War policy, and so should provide more resources to combat this particular problem.⁴ From that perspective, by virtue of its considerable power the United States had helped create many of the very issues that it faced.

This disconnect has spanned many decades and tells us something important. There are often gaps between the expectations of U.S. policy makers, the responses and actions of their Latin American counterparts, and the reaction

from the Latin American (and in some cases the U.S.) public to policy initiatives. Why do such gaps exist? What kinds of similar historical continuities still exist? Where and when do we see different kinds of policies emerging from Latin America? As this book went into production in December 2014, President Barack Obama announced historic changes in U.S. policy toward Cuba, which had been problematic since the administration of Dwight D. Eisenhower. This book will help students to understand why policies are put in place and why they might persist for many years.

U.S. and Latin American Relations argues that greater understanding requires a focus on power and, more precisely, the imbalance of power. For this reason, I employ realist theory from the scholarly literature on international relations, though I also explain how two other major theories—dependency theory and liberal institutional theory—can shed light on the relations between the United States and Latin American countries. I pay particular attention to the strengths and weaknesses of each theoretical approach. Students can therefore link political history and current events to theories that serve as guides to explain the motivations of policy makers in different states, how political and economic power are used in the international system, and probable outcomes when interstate disputes arise.

Many books have been written on this topic, to the degree that reading all of them would be impossible, especially since plenty of previously forgotten tomes are now being revived digitally, so more and more are becoming available. What sets this particular book apart is its integration of theory, scholarship, history, and pedagogy. It serves not only as a theoretically and historically oriented analysis, but also as a springboard for further learning and research.

Features

The introductory chapter establishes a theoretical context for studying relations between the United States and Latin America; the remainder of the book is split into two parts, one on historical background and one on current issues. Chapters 2 through 7 in Part I cover the period from Latin American independence in the early nineteenth century to the Cold War, highlighting the development of U.S. hegemony and shifts in relations that took place, in terms of both U.S. policy and the actions and perceptions of Latin American political leaders. It includes a case study of the Cuban revolution, which had a dramatic impact on policies in Latin American countries and in the United States. Chapters 8 through 12 in Part II detail critical contemporary issues: the politics of debt and trade, the challenges to U.S. hegemony, immigration, human rights and democracy, and drugs and terrorism. They go beyond the headlines to analyze how these issues have been addressed, the conflict and cooperation, and how U.S. power has been wielded and resisted. This book

goes beyond mere discussion and analysis. Each chapter includes a number of additional features that will help students dig deeper into the points being covered:

- A timeline of key events
- Excerpts from primary source documents
- An annotated selection of additional readings
- An annotated selection of websites
- Suggested topics for student research papers

The book also incorporates:

- A glossary for key concepts
- An extensive bibliography

Notes

- 1 <http://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-border-unaccompanied-children> (accessed February 1, 2015).
- 2 Zengerle 2014.
- 3 Nakamura and O’Keefe 2014.
- 4 O’Keefe and Correa 2014.

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Thanks to all the readers and commenters on my blog Two Weeks Notice, where I write regularly on Latin American politics and U.S.–Latin American relations. I've had many ideas stem from blog posts and the comments they receive.

For comments and sometimes corrections, I appreciate the help of Russell Bither-Terry, Alan McPherson (who pointed out some errors in a review of the first edition), and Benjamin Goldfrank. Special thanks go to the three anonymous reviewers, all of whom provided thorough and constructive suggestions. The book is better as a result.

As always, my family was a source of great encouragement. My wife Amy was always there for me, while my children Benjamin, Julia, and Elizabeth helped me recharge after hours of work. Finally, my parents John and Deanna Weeks could easily commiserate with the process of revision, having worked on a textbook with many editions. As with the first edition, I dedicate this book to them.

The Theoretical Context of U.S.–Latin American Relations

The U.S.–Latin America relationship has always had a rocky side. A combination of wars, invasions, occupations, mutual suspicion (and occasionally open dislike), dictatorships, and/or differences in ideology represents a consistent obstacle to strong national friendships. However, relations have not always been negative. Periodically, Latin American political leaders have worked closely with the U.S. government in a spirit of partnership, and the United States has also periodically offered new initiatives and said nice words intended to show a willingness to establish a positive and friendly relationship.

Yet, all too often, U.S. policy makers and the general public do not understand why Latin Americans routinely demonstrate indifferent or even hostile reactions to U.S. actions, and Latin Americans themselves often see ulterior motives in those actions.

The relationship has had it all. Militarily, just in the past several decades the United States has been deeply involved in Central American civil wars, as well as invasion (most notably Panama) and support for coups (in Venezuela and Honduras). Economically, successive U.S. governments have sought to use economic pressure to oust Fidel Castro in Cuba, while engaging in negotiations over economic agreements with a host of other countries. This U.S. military and economic behavior has been accompanied by a tremendous movement of people, looking for opportunity and self-improvement. At the same time, left-leaning political leaders have endeavored to forge new political and economic links in Latin America to create a sense of unity and to find ways around U.S. influence. The pervasive political violence that characterized the Cold War period is now gone, but new types of violence—especially the results of the drug trade—have emerged. How, then, can we make sense of it all? This book has three intertwined purposes, focusing on theory, political history, and research.

2 *U.S. and Latin American Relations*

The first is to articulate a theoretical framework, a guide to understand why governments behave in certain ways. The theoretical perspective of the book comes from the “realist” school of international relations, which focuses on the state as a central actor in international relations and on the use of power, especially military and economic power, to achieve security in an anarchic system (i.e., there is no world government). In an anarchic world, states must either sink or swim because no other state or organization will step in with assistance. Every state must depend entirely on itself to advance its interests, and all states are doing so all the time.

In his classic study of realism, Kenneth Waltz argues that an actor is powerful to the extent that he or she affects others more than they affect him or her.¹

Power, therefore, can easily be observed and is constantly present in the minds of policy makers. The history of U.S.–Latin American relations has always been characterized and shaped by significant differences in military and economic capabilities and the absence of effective international institutions to constrain the actions of the United States.

This book will address the nature of Latin America’s economic dependency and consider the merits of dependency theory, which is another prominent approach in the literature on U.S.–Latin American relations. Dependency theory posits that Latin American underdevelopment is a result of domination by more advanced economies, primarily the United States. The result is that Latin America suffers from constraints and barriers that prevent it from achieving its economic potential.

In this view, the global economy has fostered structural patterns that cannot be ignored. For example, U.S. companies have extracted natural resources—such as fruit, oil, or copper—in Latin America, then sold those products abroad, reaping tremendous profit but leaving little gain locally. Meanwhile, a small group of elites (both foreign and domestic) have garnered the lion’s share of national wealth and created a massive divide between rich and poor.

In its deterministic nature, however, this theory does not leave much room for discussion of Latin American resistance to U.S. hegemony. In one of the most important works on dependency, Andre Gunder Frank concludes by arguing that only by destroying capitalism, breaking away from world imperialism, and embracing socialism can countries successfully counteract dependency.² Cardoso and Faletto offered a modified version (interestingly, Fernando Henrique Cardoso would later become a pro-market president of Brazil) that acknowledged the possibility of developing (at least to some degree) despite dependency, but autonomy would not be a realistic goal.³ The bottom line of the theory is that true progress can never take place while contacts with the more powerful northern neighbor continue. In another seminal book on dependency, Evans posits that “dependent development” does take place, as foreign capital penetrates and creates diversified industrial sectors.⁴ So this is development but it is conditional. The end result, while admittedly industrial, remains seriously detrimental to the country as a whole because it continues

to depend on foreign interests. Latin American leaders, particularly those on the left, invoke dependency's basic message on a regular basis.

The dependency school has provided rich analyses of the challenges faced by less developed countries in Latin America, but is less well equipped to explain autonomous actions initiated within the region vis-à-vis the United States. In other words, Latin American political leaders have often worked successfully and independently within the context of a great power imbalance.

This is not to say that realism offers a perfect view of the relationship. The focus on *realpolitik* and the use of realist theory to understand U.S.–Latin American relations has many critics. As one has posited, “Even when done well, the realist argument has difficulty being precise in predictions about U.S. actions.”⁵ Similarly, another notes that the realist view fails to pinpoint precisely why the United States considers specific “Third World” regions such as Latin America to be important.⁶ Nonetheless, in this book I argue that the factors of power and security should remain front and center, even while certain aspects of realist theory should be reexamined.

The third major theoretical approach in international relations—liberal institutionalism—denies realism's assumptions about how power leads to conflict. Instead, its adherents focus on harmony of interests and how countries can successfully get along. Thus, according to Rosecrance, as nations interact with each other, they develop a stake in each other's success.⁷ International institutions can serve as vehicles for reducing the problems associated with an anarchic world, thereby mitigating some of the worst elements of power politics.

The theory envisions those institutions as taking on a life of their own. Even if they are created by powerful countries like the United States, they can become independently influential. Acceptance of their rules and norms spreads globally and disregarding them raises more protest. As a result, political leaders will be more likely to accept them, thus limiting their range of policy options.

There is also a large body of scholarly literature arguing that democracies are more likely to promote peace and avoid war.⁸ Although the chapters that follow will indeed discuss how some institutions have reduced conflict, the liberal institutional tradition tends not to adequately address the ways in which power politics has so often held sway in U.S.–Latin American relations.

For U.S. policy makers, Latin America has frequently represented both economic opportunity and a potential threat to U.S. national security. Viewed through the realist lens, U.S. policy at any given time often reflects a coherent internal logic. Latin Americans, whether politicians, rebels, or business elites, have had a keen appreciation for the power imbalance here, and they have either accepted it, attempting to use it to their advantage (many dictators retained power in this manner), or worked to counteract and/or condemn it. The dynamics of power politics and the reactions to those dynamics constitute this book's framework.

Box 1.1 Different Theoretical Perspectives: The National Security Agency Scandal

In June 2013 a former National Security Agency (N.S.A.) contractor named Edward Snowden made a dramatic announcement. The N.S.A. was conducting widespread surveillance across the world, obtaining massive amounts of information from emails, cell phones, and internet activity. He leaked classified documents to prove it. He revealed that the N.S.A. was snooping on Latin American presidents, most notably Brazil's Dilma Rousseff and Mexico's Enrique Peña Nieto.

President Rousseff and others lashed out. She canceled a long-awaited state visit to the United States and gave a blistering speech at the United Nations (U.N.), saying: "Friendly governments and societies that seek to build a true strategic partnership, as in our case, cannot allow recurring illegal actions to take place as if they were normal. They are unacceptable."⁹

The saga played out in other ways as well. Snowden went public in Hong Kong—before long he would go to Russia—and began inquiring about asylum elsewhere. Rumors immediately spread about him fleeing to Latin America. Bolivian President Evo Morales, who had already offered Snowden asylum, happened to be in Europe in July 2013. He had his plane temporarily grounded in Vienna because, at the request of the U.S. government, other European countries did not give him permission to enter their airspace. The administration of Barack Obama believed that Snowden might be on the plane. That led to more uproar, with Argentine President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner remarking that this was "vestiges of a colonialism that we thought was completely overcome."¹⁰

Realist theory would view the issue here in straightforward power terms. The United States is extremely powerful, to the point that it can easily ignore international law by spying extensively (including on the United Nations itself) and use influence in an effort to find those—like Edward Snowden—who defy it. Institutions like the U.N. might complain, and leaders of weaker countries might give speeches, but ultimately countries with the most military and economic power can dictate terms to a significant degree.

Liberal institutional theory would acknowledge the importance of power, but point to the ways in which international law is invoked and how institutions such as the United Nations matter. In December 2013 the U.N. unanimously passed a resolution calling for the respect of privacy, including digital communications. The United States voted in favor of the measure, though only after language referring to digital

privacy as a human right was removed. International institutions and norms develop gradually, but they become important in their own right. Even if the U.S. might violate international law, it cannot get away with doing whatever it wants in the same manner as in the past.

Dependency theory would consider the hegemonic position of the United States, which allows it to control technology and obtain instant access to private information globally in a way that other countries cannot. Breaking free from that control would therefore be a likely policy prescription as the only way to establish greater independence. Indeed, the Brazilian government quickly announced plans to have the country's digital information stored locally, away from the prying eyes of the U.S. government.

A consistent theme in the book is the nature of "security." A subjective term, it revolves around policy makers' belief that their state is free from harm. That goal of complete safety cannot ever be realized and so those policy makers seek rather to be as safe as possible. Realism posits that states seek to protect their interests, but the manner in which they do so depends on how policy makers define threats to national security. There are countless variations, but all come back to power and self-interest. Governments in the United States and Latin America often have differing perspectives on security, which in turn affect the dynamics of the U.S.–Latin America relationship, especially when those definitions are at odds.

Many variants of realist theory treat the state as a unitary actor; that is, regardless of the leadership a state will do what is necessary to protect its vital interests. The state itself is acting. This takes the role of individuals out of the equation and assumes that there would not be much difference regardless of who was in charge of policy making. Realism "provides no framework for understanding the specific content of state policies and the ways in which these change over time."¹¹ There has been considerable debate over this point; as Keohane and Martin argue, international relations theory must "explain variations in state preferences" by developing "theories that begin with individuals and groups."¹²

This book joins the critics in asserting that the state should not be considered a unitary entity, but rather simply a sovereign one, where changing leadership affects how the key goals of political security and economic development are understood and articulated. People do matter, and they have an independent impact on what policies ultimately are implemented. The analysis of state preferences and power, which is based on the perceptions of relevant policy makers, should be entirely consistent with realist theory.

Hegemony—meaning dominance of one country over others—and the application of U.S. interests should not be construed as so overwhelming

that Latin America becomes only a passive actor following U.S. demands. There have been many instances when the sources of policies that Latin American governments followed originated from domestic concerns and therefore were not strictly reactions to U.S. policy. Efforts at state building, internal security, economic growth, and political stability, to name just a few, have often originated within Latin American countries themselves. At the same time, the United States has clearly been impossible to ignore. In this book, it will become clear that leaders of Latin American countries, and groups within countries, developed a wide range of reactions to U.S. policy. Being a hegemonic power does not mean total control. Latin Americans have often struggled against U.S. dominance and at times have been successful in that effort. These efforts have taken many forms, including interpretations of international law, the creation of regional organizations, the formation and fomenting of rebellions and revolutions, the creation of nationalist policies, and even the production of a rich collection of literary works.

International factors also affect U.S. politics. This interplay has been labeled “intermestic” in the international relations literature. Intermestic policy arises when domestic concerns strongly influence (or even determine) foreign policy decisions. The domestic audience, which itself is a complex web of voters, political parties, economic interests, lobbyists, and other actors, has been powerful in the formulation of U.S. policy toward Latin America. It is critical to understand not only why certain policies were followed, but also who makes the decisions. Not only have there been heated battles between the U.S. executive and legislative branches for control over foreign policy, but also at times other political actors have wielded tremendous influence.

This is also true in Latin America, where different political, economic, and social actors have viewed relations with the United States in very different ways. For example, democratically elected presidents and legislatures, military governments, guerrillas, human rights activists, reformers, business elites, workers, peasants, and the urban poor view the U.S.–Latin American relationship in diverse ways and try to shape it accordingly. The region has traditionally been strongly presidential and highly centralized. As democracy spreads and new groups find voice, however, the policy context is becoming more multifaceted.

Realism tends to view international institutions as the product of states seeking to advance their core interests. These institutions reflect the aims of stronger states as a result. There is an extended debate about their importance, framed by “institutionalist” theory.¹³ This book considers institutions as the outcome when individual states come together to solve common problems, often related to security and/or economic development. However, institutions can take on lives of their own not anticipated by their creators and address areas that were not part of their original charter. The degree to which they do so is an important theme for the latter part of the book, especially with regard to human rights.

Table 1.1 Theoretical Perspectives

	<i>Realism</i>	<i>Liberal Institutionalism</i>	<i>Dependency</i>
Core Beliefs	States act in a self-interested manner to achieve security	International institutions can constrain state behavior and promote cooperation	Less developed countries are exploited by the developed world
Key Actors	Individual states, regardless of what type of government	International institutions	Developed countries and corporations
Main Instruments	Military and economic power	The rules and norms of international institutions	Economic power
Theoretical Benefits	Explains the effects of power imbalance	Explains how states change behavior because of institutions	Explains the economic obstacles to autonomy in Latin America
Theoretical Shortcomings	Does not always adequately explain Latin American responses to hegemony and complexities of policy making	Tends to overemphasize the power of international institutions	Does not adequately explain examples of Latin American autonomy

In short, there is no perfect theory, and several chapters (especially on human rights) will analyze some of realism’s shortcomings. I strongly encourage students to engage different theories of international relations in the light of empirical evidence.

The second purpose of this book is to explain the historical and contemporary shifts in attitude and policy approaches that have affected the formation and implementation of policies, in both the United States and Latin America. There is much continuity to U.S. policy, to the point where at times the cliché “the more things change, the more they stay the same” seems to ring true, but at the same time important shifts have taken place over time. Latin American leaders, meanwhile, have not viewed the relationship in static terms, because their own interests have changed. Although it is a truism to say that international relations contain elements of both continuity and change, to understand U.S.–Latin American relations it is essential to tease out the interplay between the two. There is more and more discussion in the media and elsewhere about a new relationship and we will explore that idea.

Often, shifts in policy correspond to the U.S. perception of the international system and the threats perceived to be emanating from it. Just as the

U.S. response to Latin American independence was crafted with an eye to the reactions of Spain, France, and Great Britain, Cold War and post-September 11 policies were aimed at dealing with enemies with origins outside the region, whether from Western Europe, the Soviet Union, or—increasingly—the Middle East. On many occasions, Latin Americans do not agree with U.S. assertions of imminent threat, and the debate over threats has continued unabated since the early nineteenth century.

Analysis of the Cold War period will highlight the persistent continuities, most notably the keen awareness of U.S. hegemony on the part of both U.S. policy makers and Latin Americans (whether presidents, diplomats, guerrillas, workers, or peasants). The rapid collapse of the Soviet Union drastically changed U.S. perceptions in the region, but political and economic dominance remained. Barely more than a decade later, the U.S. response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 would therefore represent far more continuity than change. Although the specific policy priorities would not be identical, U.S. strategies would remain largely constant. The post-September 11 period echoes not only the Cold War but also U.S. responses to the wars of Latin American independence and the security issues arising during World War II.

Theory and political history provide a structure for understanding, but the third purpose of this book is to provide a guide for investigating topics in more detail and even for writing research papers. Given the mass of data and dates, names and nations, it can be difficult to narrow down ideas and focus on specific issues and countries, much less to gather sources from the truly vast quantity of available books, government documents, articles, and websites. In addition to the general bibliography at the end of the book, the end of each chapter has a research section to serve as that guide.

Each research section has an annotated selection of books, with an emphasis on those containing useful overviews of the chapter's period or topic. Although these books are most often recent so that they incorporate as much updated scholarship as possible, the section also includes older reference works that have stood the test of academic time and therefore remain relevant. There are also specific government document collections that are well indexed and readily available (in some cases online) for students. The suggested readings are accompanied by possible research questions for students to explore as a way to develop term papers and research ideas. The subject matter of these questions comes from the chapter itself, but addressing the questions will require further study, with the bibliography as an initial guide. Each chapter also includes excerpts from prominent government documents, speeches, treaties, and agreements. Combined with the narrative, these documents offer a view into the world of diplomacy, negotiation, and international law.

Finally, the number of useful websites has skyrocketed, although it pales in comparison to the total number of websites on the topic. Therefore, the selected websites include those that have proved durable, credible, and/or

useful for researchers. Most are in English, but a number of Spanish-only sites are also listed.

The book should help the reader understand the distinct nature of U.S. policy toward Latin America. But what is Latin America? The answer is both simple and unsatisfactory. In general, for U.S. policy makers and scholars alike, Latin America refers to the places in the Western Hemisphere that were colonized by the Spanish and Portuguese. More specifically, that means Mexico, most of Central and South America, and parts of the Caribbean. Although the Dominican Republic and Haiti share the island now called Hispaniola (a variation of *Española*, or “Little Spain,” so called by Columbus because of its physical resemblance to Spain), the latter was a French colony but is also often included. Aside from sharing the same colonial roots, a number of economic, political, and cultural similarities bind Latin American countries together. Yet we have to be aware at all times that the people who live within this vast region do not consider themselves part of a single bloc. Even the similarities—such as language—find very different expression, depending not



Figure 1.1 Map of Latin America

only on the country in question but also regions and peoples within the same country. In fact, the idea that North Americans view such a wide variety of people as homogeneous leaves many Latin Americans shaking their heads. It is a trap that is easy to fall into, and although this book utilizes “Latin America” to describe regional trends, it also differentiates the relationships between the United States and various groups and governments within the region.

We must furthermore keep in mind that U.S. interest has also shifted over time according to the subregion. Given its proximity and shared border, the United States has for a long time paid very close attention to political developments in Mexico. Central America and the Caribbean (especially Cuba) were also of much greater concern than South America in the nineteenth century. South America became comparatively prominent only around World War II, as the global struggle brought the region directly onto the U.S. foreign policy radar and left it there for decades. Each chapter therefore addresses the shifting regional interests of the United States and attempts to answer the question of why U.S. political leaders are particularly interested in certain parts of Latin America at any given time.

Structure

This book is divided into two sections. The first provides historical background and context, and the second covers contemporary issues, by examining critical current issues in U.S.–Latin American relations through theoretical and empirical lenses to come to a better understanding of how and why they are occurring.

Chapter 2 addresses the first half of the nineteenth century, particularly the wars for independence, nation building, and the U.S. concern to keep European influence out of the hemisphere, exemplified by the Monroe Doctrine. This period also demonstrates how U.S. policy makers viewed the hemisphere and its potential for political and economic development.

Chapter 3 covers the latter half of the nineteenth century and the shifts in policy that result from the industrial revolution and the growth of U.S. economic influence. The assertion of power for economic reasons became known as “dollar diplomacy” and increased U.S. attempts to direct Latin American politics in a manner favorable to U.S. economic and strategic interests. It culminated in U.S. policy toward Cuba after the Spanish-American War expelled Spain from the region. During this period, Latin American reactions against U.S. hegemony become sharper.

Chapter 4 focuses on the first third of the twentieth century, as outright claims to hegemony and repeated intervention gave way to President Franklin Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor Policy, which emphasized the beginning of an era of cooperation. At the same time, Latin American rebellions and reforms marked concerted efforts to avoid U.S. domination.

Chapter 5 describes the beginning of the Cold War, as U.S. policy shifted to combat the spread of Communism. The tenets of the Good Neighbor Policy soon disappeared, replaced by a renewed commitment to intervene precisely in those countries where Latin American reforms sought to establish greater national control over the economy.

Chapter 6 continues the same theme, covering the Cuban revolution and its immense impact on U.S. policy. During this period, U.S. concerns over Communism increased considerably. For U.S. policy makers, Fidel Castro himself became a symbol of Communist revolutions that the United States was committed to derailing, while for many Latin Americans he was the leader of a movement that intended to break away from U.S. hegemony.

Chapter 7 traces the remainder of the Cold War, as the United States continued to fight what it viewed as Communist infiltration in the hemisphere; its fight included supporting a variety of military governments. Central America, through revolution and armed rebellion against U.S.-supported regimes, became a focal point for U.S. policy, but attention to South America also became more intense, as the dictatorships in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile demonstrate.

Chapter 8 examines the challenges to U.S. hegemony that began to grow in the first decade of the twenty-first century. The election of leftist leaders to Latin American presidencies spurred the creation of new institutions that consciously excluded the United States, and the promotion of a renewal of Pan Americanism that could serve to balance U.S. power.

Chapter 9 focuses on political economy, specifically the policies of debt and free trade. The politics of debt in the 1980s had lasting effects, and free trade, with agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), remains hotly debated both in the United States and within Latin American countries, including sometimes violent responses.

Chapter 10 centers on immigration and the ways U.S. policy makers have addressed it, with specific attention to the dynamics of both legal and illegal immigrants in addition to refugees. It analyzes the factors affecting supply (why immigrants seek to come to the United States) and demand (why U.S. employers attract immigrants), the reactions to immigration in the United States, and the economic ramifications of immigration for Latin American countries.

Chapter 11 focuses on human rights, democracy, and the changing perceptions of the need to protect human rights. The U.S. government, along with some Latin American governments, has been concerned about Communism, drugs, and terrorism, which have given rise to conflict not only with Latin American political leaders and activists but also within the United States itself. The twin priorities of protecting individual liberties and combating “threats to public order” are sometimes difficult to reconcile.

Chapter 12 focuses on terrorism and violence in Latin America, U.S. attempts to eliminate it, and how the U.S.–Latin American relationship has

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changed since September 11, 2001. It discusses the intermestic nature of the formulation of antidrug and antiterrorist policies, the different strategies employed, and the very different way in which many Latin Americans view the problem of drugs and related violence. The identification of terrorist threats in the region, the increased reliance on military solutions, and pressure to contribute to the global fight against terrorism have all had a significant impact on both the United States and Latin America.

Notes

- 1 Waltz 1979, 192.
- 2 Gunder Frank 1967.
- 3 Cardoso and Faletto 1979.
- 4 Evans 1979.
- 5 Cottam 1994, 6.
- 6 Desch 1993, 6–9.
- 7 Rosecrance 1986.
- 8 See Kinsella 2005.
- 9 Borger 2013.
- 10 Neuman and Smale 2013.
- 11 Hurrell 1996, 164–65.
- 12 Keohane and Martin 2003, 96.
- 13 For the essence of the debate, see Baldwin 1993.

Further Sources

Although the book provides sources on specific topics, there are several excellent places to start learning more about both past and current U.S. policy.

McPherson, Alan (ed.). *Encyclopedia of U.S. Military Interventions in Latin America* (2 vols) (Santa Barbara, CA, ABC-CLIO, 2013). A useful compendium of articles centering specifically on the issue of military intervention.

Leonard, Thomas M., Jürgen Büchenau, Graeme Mount, and Kyle Longley (eds.). *Encyclopedia of U.S.-Latin American Relations* (3 vols) (Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press, 2012). This is a general encyclopedia that covers all the topics explored in this book, from events to individuals.

Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States. Most commonly referred to as FRUS, these documents contain correspondence between the U.S. government (primarily the State Department) and U.S. diplomats in other countries, as well as a large number of documents. The series began in 1861 and new volumes are frequently published. The only limitation is that the volumes produced at any given time must contain documents that are approximately 30 years old. Increasingly, these volumes are being released online at the State Department's website, which even offers ebook options for download: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments>

Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States. As the title suggests, this series collects each president's public papers, which means speeches, statements, and other papers that were originally released through the Office of the Press Secretary. It is fully indexed, and so it is easy to pinpoint policy statements about Latin America. The series dates back to the administration of Herbert Hoover, and some volumes are available online: <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/publications/presidential-papers.html>

Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents. Every Monday, the U.S. government releases the presidential documents of the previous week. The online versions of these documents date back to 1993. Search options include keywords, so specific countries, presidents, agreements, and other topics are instantly available at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=CPD>

Department of State, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. This part of the State Department deals with Latin America. Its website is useful because it contains press releases, government reports, congressional testimony, and legislation about U.S. policy toward Latin America. It is not necessarily comprehensive and may not contain all legislation that affects the region, but it is always updated and provides a good glimpse into current policies: <http://www.state.gov/p/wha/>

The Roots of U.S. and Latin American Relations

Timeline

1807–1808	Napoleon Bonaparte invades Portugal and Spain
1811–1826	Most Spanish colonies and Brazil become independent
1811	No-Transfer Resolution passed by U.S. Congress
1822	United States first grants diplomatic recognition to independent Latin American states
1823	Monroe Doctrine proclaimed
1826	Simón Bolívar organizes first inter-American conference
1846–1848	War with Mexico, culminating in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo
1850	United States and Great Britain sign Clayton-Bulwer Treaty to share control over a canal
1854	Ostend Manifesto announced regarding U.S. interests in Cuba
1855–1857	William Walker fights in Nicaragua
1861–1865	U.S. Civil War
1862–1867	France invades and occupies Mexico
1878	French company begins work on a canal through Panama

At the dawn of the nineteenth century, the United States was a fledgling power, weaker than many European countries in both economic and military terms. The central government had effective control over only a small area of the continent, and disputes between it and the individual states were already

well entrenched. The country had continental aspirations, but only gradually would it begin moving its border westward. The power imbalance between the United States and Latin America was therefore not yet great, but it would rapidly swing in the U.S. direction in the first decades of the century. This chapter analyzes the challenges in establishing and maintaining relations between governments in the United States and Latin America and concludes with the post–Civil War period, at which time U.S. economic and military power began to increase markedly.

Latin America remained under the colonial control of Spain and Portugal (even though that was about to change) and its political and economic autonomy was very limited. Its European-origin inhabitants had not yet defined clear boundaries or even established firm control over territory; outlying areas were still dominated by indigenous groups or regional strongmen. Although there was trade with the United States, it did not yet contribute significantly to most of their economies, and interaction between the United States and Latin America had not yet developed significantly.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, U.S.–Latin American relations can be viewed in terms of newly independent countries (including the United States) trying to create new nations and to define their boundaries, their relationships with Europe, and their relationships with each other. In an environment bordering on paranoia, mutual wariness quickly became evident. Wars over territory periodically erupted, nascent nationalism grew, and trade gradually increased as well. Following the end of the Civil War in 1865, the United States was continuing its economic growth and consolidating its position as an important (though not yet dominant) political, economic, and military power in the region. Security was paramount everywhere, because the continued existence of these states was no foregone conclusion. Following realist assumptions, political leaders in the United States viewed Latin America mainly in the context of how European rivalries and imperial ambitions threatened U.S. interests. That eventually entailed seeing the region as part of a balance against European power.

Most of Latin America became independent between 1811 and 1826, largely as a result of the implosion of the once dominant Spanish empire. The legendary reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, who presided over the conquering of the “new” world beginning in 1492, was centuries past, replaced over time by a problematic combination of mismanagement, lethargy, and greed. The final straw, however, was that by 1808 the monarchy found it very difficult to maintain an empire while simultaneously being invaded by France. Something had to give. Even though he did not intend it, Napoleon played a key role in advancing the cause of Latin American independence.

When Spain was invaded, revolution did not immediately erupt across the region. Colonial elites had many reasons to be skeptical—even nervous—about independence. As long as profit and social order were maintained, then little was to be gained. But sentiment varied greatly because elites were split,

depending on the degree of their allegiance to Spain and their desire to maintain the colonial political and social hierarchy. The prospect of increasing their own power was tantalizing. Initially, local leaders created “caretaker” governments that would serve until colonial rule was restored. However, resentment between the Spanish-born (“Peninsulars,” referring to the Iberian peninsula of Spain and Portugal) and native-born whites (“Creoles,” from the Spanish word *criollo*, which in turn derived from the Latin *creare*, meaning “to create,” referring to the fact that a new mixed race of people was being created), which had been bubbling along, soon boiled over. Creoles felt subjugated because Peninsulars were granted all privileges by Spain and wielded most of the political and economic power. In addition, when the Spanish monarchy was restored in 1814, local elites felt that they deserved autonomy in return for loyalty, but Ferdinand VII refused and instead sought to restore absolute control over his domain. Creoles were not deemed trustworthy enough. That belief had the effect of severing ties with many colonial elites, who felt betrayed.

Several geographical and political characteristics of Latin America at the time of independence greatly affected hemispheric relations. For example, when the United States recognized Mexico as an independent country in 1822, it included all of what is now the southwestern United States, a total of more than a million square miles. Meanwhile, Colombia included present-day Panama, the thin isthmus that pokes up from the northern tip of South America. In both cases, the United States would eventually go to war either to take or to seize parts of those territories.

In addition, Latin American “independence” did not yet refer to the entire continent. The Dominican Republic, which shared the island of Hispaniola with Haiti, did not become fully independent until 1844 because Haiti had successfully invaded and occupied its territory. In Brazil, the Portuguese monarchs had sought refuge from Napoleon’s onslaught and in 1822 the king’s son, Pedro I, proclaimed himself emperor. After negotiations, his father assented to independence, and the process was far less violent than in Spanish America. Brazil therefore became independent but remained closely tied to Portugal.

Neither did Cuba (or Puerto Rico) become independent at this point. Worried in particular about the possibility of a slave uprising if revolution was attempted, Cuban elites chose the safer route of remaining a colony. Cuba and the United States gradually developed very close ties, despite high taxes imposed by the Spanish crown and the general discouragement of non-Spanish trade. As it would be in the twentieth century, Cuba became a playground for wealthy Americans. The slave trade flourished and after the U.S. Civil War a wave of Southerners and their slaves arrived. The influx from the United States also fostered boarding houses and brothels. There were, as Pérez argues (quoting President William McKinley), “ties of singular intimacy” long before Cuba shed Spanish rule.¹

More than once, serious plans were laid in the United States to buy or seize Cuba from Spain. Southerners supported the idea either as a way to bring in another slave state or as a place where slaves could be sent if they became too much trouble for their owners. In 1852, Great Britain and France invited the United States to sign a joint treaty guaranteeing continued Spanish control of Cuba, ostensibly to promote stability on the island. Rejecting the idea, the United States government stated that there was a long-standing policy to acquire Cuba at some point. In 1854, the Ostend Manifesto (so named because the U.S. ministers to Spain, France, and England were meeting in Ostend, Belgium) spelled out why the United States should purchase Cuba and, if Spain were not willing to sell, stated that troops should take it by force to maintain order. In particular, the large slave population in Cuba, combined with weak Spanish rule, raised the possibility of a debilitating slave revolt that could spread to the United States. It is not likely that Northerners would have accepted the entrance of Cuba as another state, but this became a moot point, as the details of the manifesto were leaked and the plan was quickly scuttled.

Security and U.S. Policy

As soon as the United States won its own battle against its former colonizer, the leadership quickly became more concerned about developments south of its border. The direction of events was uncertain, and in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, U.S. policy makers had long debates about the course of action that would best suit U.S. interests. Even the definition of such interests was open to debate. They included keeping European influence out of the hemisphere as much as possible, acquiring territory then owned by Spain and France, and cementing the still fragile “united” states of America. If the United States were to openly support the revolutionary movements in Latin America, what effect would that decision have on U.S. national interests?

National security was central, and a number of potential threats were immediately apparent. For example, what is now eastern Florida was Spanish territory, and if the Spanish empire fell apart, it was easy to imagine a foreign power moving in to take advantage of the situation. As British encroachments on U.S. sovereignty increased, such as seizing ships and forcing U.S. citizens to join the British navy, hawks in Congress clamored for a clear statement to deny any European incursions. In 1811, Congress passed the No Transfer Resolution, which proclaimed the right of the United States to occupy the Florida territory if another country sought to take it. It stated that if the United States were to “see any part of the said territory pass into the hands of any foreign power,” then a “due regard to their own safety compels them to provide, under certain contingencies, for the temporary occupations of the said territory.” It would then be “subject to a future negotiation.”²² The issue of eastern Florida remained unresolved until 1819, when a treaty with Spain ceded it to the United States

in exchange only for not taxing Spanish ships any more than U.S. ships in the ports of Pensacola and St. Augustine for twelve years.

Other security threats to the United States at the time were both real and complex, to the point that historians continue to debate them. All tend to agree that the United States felt vulnerable on all flanks. European powers viewed the region as a potential source of aggrandizement, whether through trade or imperial expansion. This means that realism offers a useful guide for understanding U.S. actions, especially since economic interests were not well developed. Latin America was not yet dependent on the United States as a market for its primary products, though that would come as the century progressed.

Spain itself, of course, represented a serious problem, but mostly in terms of its disintegration as opposed to its expansion. The fact that Spain managed to hold on to Cuba (as well as Puerto Rico) did serve to maintain its presence in the Western Hemisphere for almost a hundred more years, but the handwriting was on the wall for Spain as a global power. It did send troops to the Dominican Republic in 1861 in a briefly successful effort to retake the former colony, and it attacked Peru in 1864 for not paying debts allegedly owed as a result of the independence wars. (A peace treaty was not signed until 1879.) But these events were isolated, the death rattle of empire.

Great Britain was far more dangerous. The White House had barely been built when British soldiers torched it in the War of 1812. Britain was busily developing extensive trade relations in Central America and even went to South America, where, for example, over time it built the Chilean navy. From 1803 to 1811, the British navy disrupted trade between the United States and the rebellious Latin American colonies. In addition, a number of Caribbean islands were part of the British Empire. Until 1981, Belize would also remain a British protectorate in Central America and a constant source of border conflict with Guatemala. Great Britain invested heavily in Argentina as well, and in 1833 even took possession of a small group of islands off its coast (the Falkland Islands, or *Islas Malvinas*, as Argentina called—and still calls—them). In general, Britain competed—often successfully—with the United States for diplomatic and economic influence throughout the hemisphere.

Nonetheless, as the wars between the United States and Britain faded into the past, bilateral relations improved greatly. Treaties and agreements in the years immediately after the War of 1812 removed British opposition to U.S. westward expansion and served to delineate borders. Meanwhile, political leaders in the two countries very often shared the same suspicions about continental Europe, especially in terms of what would happen to the colonies of the crumbling and tattered Spanish empire.

The French represented a threat as a result of the French Revolution and the rise to power of Napoleon Bonaparte in the late eighteenth century. In 1800, France forced Spain to hand over the Louisiana territories. Given the importance of the Mississippi river for trade, Thomas Jefferson soon began negotiations to purchase the territories, with a deal finally completed in 1803.

Back in Europe, with the intent of conquering Portugal, in 1807 Napoleon signed an agreement with Spain to allow an army of 28,000 French soldiers to march from France to Lisbon. In early 1808, Napoleon decided to send soldiers to invade Spain—sandwiched in the middle—as well. Thus began the occupation of the Iberian Peninsula.

As Napoleon's quest to conquer Europe drained his resources, he largely turned away from the Western Hemisphere. A year after invading Spain, he issued a proclamation that France would not oppose revolution and independence in the Spanish colonies, "provided that these peoples do not form any relations with England."³ This policy corresponded with U.S. interests but would shift after Napoleon's downfall; the new French government subsequently supported Spanish efforts to maintain its colonies. Spanish ministers also reminded France that the recognition of revolution in one area of the world could spell the end of colonial rule everywhere. France was therefore a periodic diplomatic thorn in the side of the United States, but after the Louisiana Purchase it no longer represented a pressing threat.

Russia was also present. Initially, the tsar tried to help Spain regain its colonies, even with military assistance. It made sense to quash revolution; in the eyes of monarchs, the phenomenon has an annoying tendency to spread. Nonetheless, given its own conflict with France and the acknowledgment that Spain was beyond help, the tsar moved instead to expand Russia's presence in the Western Hemisphere and to establish both diplomatic and economic relationships with the new states. Most prominently, this meant aggressive actions to establish Russian economic influence in Brazil and in what would become California, in addition to a presence in Alaska.

There were, therefore, powerful European countries with a variety of interests—both political and economic—in the region at the time of the Latin American wars for independence, and most had sought to make arrangements that would disadvantage the others. Ultimately, U.S. leaders perceived more threat in the constant conniving than in the military or economic might of any one particular country, and eventually they would declare that Europe should simply stay out.

However, threats to the national security of the United States were not only external. The country had existed for only a few decades and still was not very unified. During this early period, the dissolution of the Spanish empire posed a potentially disastrous challenge to the continued development of that unity. In particular, would the revolutionary fever spread through Florida, or through Louisiana, which had been purchased in only 1803? There was simply no assurance that these territories would remain part of the United States, because they might decide they were better off alone. Policy deliberations therefore also kept that possibility closely in mind.

As presidents and members of Congress tried to figure out how to deal with Spanish American rebellion, they made no bones about the fact that U.S. interests were paramount and that the needs, desires, or goals of the

rebels themselves were close to irrelevant. The U.S. government sent agents to different parts of Latin America and in some cases instructed them to provide moral support. But the rebels needed muskets, not vague pronouncements, and weapons were not forthcoming from the United States. Meanwhile, some of the U.S. diplomatic agents even fostered within Latin Americans a dislike for the United States, as they demonstrated their distaste for what they saw as uncouth rebels or took sides in factional disputes.

The official policy of the United States was “friendly” neutrality, intended to avoid antagonizing Spain while turning a blind eye as private ships left U.S. harbors with supplies. Revolutionaries often arrived to purchase weapons and even to build or purchase new ships. In 1816, the U.S. government “lent” some powder to a Venezuelan agent, claiming it was surplus. Despite constant protests by the Spanish government, there was very little enforcement of neutrality agreements. Yet official U.S. support never materialized.

It is clear that no policy maker had any faith in the ability of newly independent countries in the region to become stable, much less democratic. There is overwhelming evidence that the conventional wisdom in the United States was that Latin Americans were by nature incapable of much of anything. John Adams, for example, wrote that the idea of establishing democracy in the region was “as absurd as similar plans would be to establish democracies among the birds, beasts, and fishes.”⁴ That flowed both from pervasive racism and anti-Catholicism. There were indeed clear limits to the sympathy within the United States for the rebels. Congressional debate showed more interest in the Greeks (who at the time were seeking independence from the Ottoman Empire) than the Latin Americans, and Great Britain proved more generous with providing credit to Latin America.⁵

Though Latin America had followed the U.S. example of a revolutionary break with its former colonizer—another ragtag army fighting a European power—it was given little credit. In 1816, one observer told the U.S. Congress, “the struggle of liberty in South America will turn out in the end something like the French liberty, a detestable despotism.”⁶ Even in the late 1990s, as a senior U.S. Army officer surveyed U.S. military programs around the world, he spoke of Indonesia: “It’s one of only a few formerly colonized countries in the world that has gained independence through revolution. There’s us, Vietnam, and Indonesia.”⁷ Latin America did not merit mention. Although tied to the United States in so many ways, whether geographical, political, cultural, or economic, it was still considered a backwater.

Nonetheless, at least on the surface Latin American countries emulated the political institutions of the United States. The new constitutions set up presidential systems with separation of powers and civil liberties, but these would become mixed with elements of French constitutional provisions and the Spanish constitution of 1812, a time when Spain was dabbling in republican government.⁸ This mix meant the articulation of personal and political liberties with strong presidential governments, but in states of

emergency (decided by some combination of the president and Congress), all such liberties could be suspended.

For example, Venezuela adopted the first Latin American constitution in 1811. Section Two clearly lays out that all Venezuelans are guaranteed the rights of liberty, and the amendments encapsulated in the Bill of Rights.⁹ In Venezuela, there was also liberty (preamble and amendment five), security (amendment four), and law (five and six). Yet unlike the United States, Venezuela established Catholicism as its official religion (placed prominently as the first article), and article 134 gave the president and legislature (or, if the legislature could not be convened, only the president) all power necessary to put down “domestic violence.” Those powers owed much to the French constitution, which evolved as revolution affected public order, and by 1797 it allowed the government to establish a state of siege to combat “internal security.” Future constitutions, in Venezuela (where that first constitution lasted only eight years) and elsewhere, would reinforce this hybrid foreign influence. And, as in the United States, Latin American political elites were not eager to extend rights and liberties to all their fellow citizens, or even most of them. Many shared the same doubts as U.S. policy makers regarding whether their countries could (or should) become democracies.

The “founding fathers” of Latin America—the generals fighting for independence—such as Simón Bolívar (Venezuela), Agustín de Iturbide (who eventually proclaimed himself emperor of Mexico), José de San Martín (Argentina), and Bernardo O’Higgins (Chile), generally rejected the model of federalism and limited government developed in the United States and instead emphasized centralism and a strong executive. Although they disagreed about the precise nature of the new political systems (and many different political experiments would be conducted, with more than a hundred constitutions promulgated in the nineteenth century), they were united in a vision of a strong government capable of restoring and then maintaining order; Bolívar even advocated a president-for-life position. Their charters therefore resembled the U.S. model but developed their own distinct flavors according to the security concerns of the era.

The nature of these political foundations also meant that for decades the policy process in Latin America would be dominated by the executive branch. Presidents, not legislators, would determine how to interact with the United States. Thus, the political leanings of the president would resolve the question of whether the country would work closely with the United States.

Recognition of the New Nations

Two series of events in the 1820s further defined the U.S. attitude toward the new nations and its relationship with them. First, in 1822 the United States granted diplomatic recognition to five Latin American countries (Argentina,

Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru). Essentially, that meant the United States had formally declared that these new nations had the right to exist independently and that it would therefore enter into full diplomatic relations with them. The decision was based almost entirely on the idea, expressed most clearly by Thomas Jefferson, that if a government had *de facto* control then it deserved recognition.¹⁰ In other words, ideology or attitude toward the United States did not matter. The main criterion was simply having control of territory and people. This diplomatic recognition had more of a symbolic impact than anything else. The United States was in no hurry to establish trade relations or have much interaction at all with these new, weak, bloodstained countries that U.S. investors and politicians alike viewed as backward and uncivilized. Nonetheless, it did provide an example for other countries to follow, because the United States was the first country outside Latin America to grant recognition.

The decision to recognize had been a matter of debate for years, but no consensus had been reached. One reason was that the most vocal proponent of granting recognition, Henry Clay, was speaker of the House of Representatives, and his efforts were viewed as an attempt to give diplomatic power to Congress, which presidents saw as their sole domain. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams wrote that Clay's insistence was an attempt "to control or overthrow the Executive."¹¹ It was also part of an effort to launch Clay's own presidential bid and contained some personal elements as well, in that Clay had wanted President Monroe to choose him as secretary of state.

In this era, the boundaries of executive, legislative, and judicial powers in the United States were still fluid, which raised the stakes, and that struggle over control never disappeared. In particular, it continues to emerge whenever the president and the congressional majority disagree on policy. Ultimately, President James Monroe used his authority to grant recognition, and subsequent federal court decisions upheld that authority.

Latin American responses to these developments were laced with caution and even suspicion. Simón Bolívar, whose leadership made him known as the liberator of the Spanish American colonies, convened a conference of American states (the Congress of Panama) in 1826 with the hope of creating a loose confederation that would foster trade and provide protection against external enemies. His argument that this new arrangement "seems destined to form a league more extensive, more remarkable, and more powerful than any that has ever existed on the face of the earth" was certainly exaggerated, but it did mark the beginning of many attempts to bring the countries of the region together.¹² Bolívar invited Great Britain (given its wartime assistance) and only belatedly the United States (whose delegates were sent but never arrived because of transportation problems, illness, and even death—congressional debate over even sending them was intense). His emphasis, though, was on Great Britain instead of the United States. Bolívar's attitude was, as he wrote in 1829, that the United States "seem destined by Providence to plague America with torments in the name of freedom."¹³

After all, it is fair to ask why Latin American leaders would have confidence in the intentions and actions of the United States. During the wars for independence, the United States had been neutral and so had not demonstrated open support for fellow revolutionaries; negotiations with Spain took precedence. From the beginning, U.S. diplomats often failed to demonstrate that the United States had any profound interest in the region.

Nation Building and International Relations in Latin America

There was, however, no monolithic Latin American relationship with the northern neighbor. In many countries, political competition after independence revolved around liberals and conservatives, who had very different views. Bearing no resemblance to U.S. definitions, in Latin America “liberal” referred (with some regional variation) to those who looked to the United States and Europe as political models, advocating republican and democratic values (though with clear restrictions on who could participate), separation of church and state, the dismantling of the traditional aristocracy, and the rapid growth of trade and production. “Conservative” had opposite connotations, being more traditional, nationalist, and close to the Catholic Church. In general, liberals were more interested in alliances with U.S. politicians and business leaders.

The emergence of these political differences also came in the context of the development of new states and uncertain ideas about nationality. These new states were to varying degrees born dependent on the economies of Europe. The capitalist classes, already enjoying strong ties to their counterparts in the more developed world, worked to create states that served their economic interests and were centralized in the capital.

In the case of South America, for example, Centeno argues that the state’s fiscal capacity (that is, the ability of these new states to establish effective economic administration, impose and collect taxes, and otherwise impose the rule of law) remained almost nonexistent, and instead there were “only perpetually bankrupt beggar states.”¹⁴ They emerged broke from independence. But Centeno also notes that the key reason for the weakness of these states was that wars rarely occurred. “Total wars,” with full mobilization (and militarization) of the population, many deaths, and a crusade mentality, have always been lacking in Latin America. Instead, there have been “limited wars” that are smaller geographically, originate in economic or frontier conflicts, and may not even affect a large proportion of the citizenry.¹⁵

To this day there has never been a South American continental war. Unlike Europe, where such wars solidified national identity and forced states to develop their own means of financing their security, in Latin America limited

wars meant that the sense of being in a collective enterprise did not extend much beyond the capitals and major cities, and the state simply incurred debt to fund the fighting.

For U.S.–Latin American relations, these issues would have important consequences. First, the failure of Latin American countries to become financially independent would soon trouble U.S. policy makers because European governments would begin intervening in order to collect. Second, Latin American perceptions of “security” were much more internally oriented. It was considered critical to consolidate control over the country’s territory rather than to concentrate on external enemies. As Loveman argues, Latin American leaders had to construct “la Patria” (the nation or “fatherland”) in the face of a highly divided population (often including indigenous groups, which persistently resisted encroachment on their territory), and they did so through the use of some type of military force.¹⁶

One core idea of realism is that the state’s primary goal is security. The United States defined security in terms of freedom from European aggression, but the weaker Latin American states viewed security largely as control over internal opposition. Although immediately after independence they faced threats from Spain (and, in Central America, from Great Britain), their main concern would be European efforts to collect debt. Over time, this meant that the United States would be successful in taking advantage of internal conflict and thereby imposing its own version of security over the region.

Argentina provides a glimpse into these dynamics. Its capital, Buenos Aires, was an integral and flourishing part of the Spanish economic empire, but revolution forced its elites to adopt new institutions as a way to maintain their prominence and to create order out of revolutionary chaos. The caudillo of Buenos Aires province, Juan Manuel de Rosas, fought successfully to take over the government, established a harsh dictatorship, and ruled in 1829 through 1832 and then again from 1835 to 1853. Like other Argentine leaders, Rosas encouraged foreign investment and trade with Europe, especially with Great Britain, where there was great interest in Argentine cattle. From this combination of political repression and foreign economic presence emerged a state marked by corruption, weak control over distant provinces, and dependence on foreign capital. By the end of the nineteenth century, Argentina was widely considered an up-and-coming economic power, and Buenos Aires was imbued with European flavor. It did not, however, effectively counter the expansion of U.S. political influence in the region.

The Origins of the Monroe Doctrine

The next critical definition of U.S. policy came at the end of an annual presidential message to Congress in 1823 by James Monroe. Several paragraphs outlined the U.S. view on European activity in the Western Hemisphere, and

a new doctrine was born. Without it, Monroe's name might have passed into the relative obscurity of the Fillmores, Arthurs, and Harrisons. Instead, the Monroe Doctrine is the most enduring symbol of U.S. interest in Latin America. It stated simply that the United States would stay out of Europe's business and expected the reverse to hold as well. If Europe tried to "extend its political system" in Latin America, it would be viewed as "endangering our peace and happiness."

The idea that European meddling was unacceptable already had deep roots and was a logical extension of the anti-Europe sentiment that had found voice since the U.S. revolution. Up to that point, all U.S. presidents had at some time openly advocated isolationism (despite maintaining an active international presence at the same time). Monroe's speech was distinctive, however, because it shifted from isolationism to a more active expression of hemispheric hegemony. The speech itself was directed at Russia and at the Holy Alliance (which in addition to Russia included Austria, France, and Prussia). The former was encroaching on U.S. territory in the Pacific Northwest. Meanwhile, rumors were flying that the latter, in its quest to stem the growth of republican political systems, sought to aid Spain in restoring its control over the former colonies. (It is far from clear whether those rumors were true.) Hearing these rumors, the British had approached the Monroe administration in hopes of forging a joint declaration against the Holy Alliance. Monroe decided to move forward alone.

Box 2.1 The Monroe Doctrine (1823)

[T]he occasion has been judged proper for asserting, as a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers. ... Of events in that [European] quarter of the globe, with which we have so much intercourse and from which we derive our origin, we have always been anxious and interested spectators. The citizens of the United States cherish sentiments the most friendly in favor of the liberty and happiness of their fellowmen on that side of the Atlantic. In the wars of the European powers in matters relating to themselves we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy so to do. It is only when our rights are invaded or seriously menaced that we resent injuries or make preparation for our defense. With the movements in this hemisphere we are of necessity more immediately connected, and by causes which must be obvious to all enlightened and impartial

observers. The political system of the allied powers is essentially different in this respect from that of America. This difference proceeds from that which exists in their respective Governments; and to the defense of our own, which has been achieved by the loss of so much blood and treasure, and matured by the wisdom of their most enlightened citizens, and under which we have enjoyed unexampled felicity, this whole nation is devoted.

We owe it, therefore, to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the Governments who have declared their independence and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States.

Our policy in regard to Europe, which was adopted at an early stage of the wars which have so long agitated that quarter of the globe, nevertheless remains the same, which is, not to interfere in the internal concerns of any of its powers; to consider the government de facto as the legitimate government for us; to cultivate friendly relations with it, and to preserve those relations by a frank, firm, and manly policy, meeting in all instances the just claims of every power, submitting to injuries from none. But in regard to those continents circumstances are eminently and conspicuously different. It is impossible that the allied powers should extend their political system to any portion of either continent without endangering our peace and happiness; nor can anyone believe that our southern brethren, if left to themselves, would adopt it of their own accord. It is equally impossible, therefore, that we should behold such interposition in any form with indifference. If we look to the comparative strength and resources of Spain and those new Governments, and their distance from each other, it must be obvious that she can never subdue them. It is still the true policy of the United States to leave the parties to themselves, in the hope that other powers will pursue the same course. ...

Initially, it was hard for anyone to take Monroe's doctrine too seriously. The United States was still in no position to be taking on European powers militarily, and had a much less developed diplomatic corps. Great Britain had the most powerful navy in the world, and France's was also formidable. Europe's response was to scoff at the idea (and the British were annoyed that Monroe had rejected their offer of a joint declaration). Battling the British at home was a far cry from sending an army to, for example, the far reaches of the south Atlantic coast. Only ten years later, Britain seized the Falkland Islands/Islas Malvinas off the coast of Argentina. These islands once again became prominent in 1982, when an Argentine dictatorship invaded in an attempt to incite a surge of nationalism. Both in 1833 and in 1982, the United States made no protest as British forces defeated Argentina, and in 1982 it actively aided Britain with intelligence.

The Monroe Doctrine was never applied uniformly, as other European incursions periodically occurred. The United States also made clear that the doctrine should not be interpreted as a desire to create security agreements or treaties with Latin American countries. It was a unilateral policy. The U.S. minister to Mexico stated erroneously that the doctrine was a "pledge," but the U.S. government was quick to explain that he was mistaken.¹⁷ In the 1820s and 1830s, several Latin American leaders invoked the doctrine when



Figure 2.1 “The Birth of the Monroe Doctrine, 1823.” Left to right: John Quincy Adams, William Harris Crawford, William Wirt, President James Monroe, John C. Calhoun, Daniel D. Tompkins, and John McLean. Painting by Clyde O. DeLand. Source: The Granger Collection/TopFoto.

confronted by European militaries, but their requests were ignored. In the case of the Falkland Islands/Islas Malvinas, the United States noted that the British had laid claim to the islands before independence, and so the doctrine did not apply.¹⁸ In 1838, the French blockaded the port of the Argentine capital, Buenos Aires, but the United States chose not to respond. There were few in the United States interested in transforming Monroe's words into a fixed policy, which would represent entangling alliances that could push the country toward war against its best interests. The "doctrine" was selective, and indeed the United States was usually in no position to enforce it anyway. U.S. interest alone dictated action.

This response disappointed a number of Latin American leaders, who for a brief time entertained the hope that Monroe was reaching out to his neighbors. The United States was the only country to offer any sort of rhetorical defense against European efforts at economic domination. European countries were far more apt to intervene than the United States, and so Argentina, for example, believed that the United States might at least be able to prevent European meddling. Perhaps some measure of unity could offer protection against this common enemy.

For many in the United States, policy makers and academics alike, the Monroe Doctrine was deemed wholly beneficial for all involved, most especially Latin Americans. As one U.S.–Latin America textbook put it in 1920, the doctrine had "saved South America from the kind of exploitation to which the continents of Africa and Asia have, during the past generation, fallen a prey."¹⁹ Because it did not engage in traditional colonization, the idea that the United States had any hand in exploitation would not be widely debated until several decades later.

At the time, authority over Latin American states remained in question, as regional caudillos fought each other for access to the resources available only to those who controlled the government. In Argentina, the destructive nature of these battles was captured in a book entitled *Civilization or Barbarism*, published in 1845. After describing the viciousness of Rosas and a regional caudillo (Facundo Quiroga), Sarmiento asks simply, "Have Facundo or Rosas ever done the least thing for the public good, or been interested in any useful object? No. From them come nothing but blood and crimes."²⁰ In much of Latin America, security concerns were largely turned inward, which left these new states more open to foreign encroachment. The inability of Latin American countries to shake free of European domination underlined the growing power imbalance with the United States.

The fledgling Central American Confederation (what are now Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica) requested U.S. assistance to counter British border encroachment, military threat, and commercial domination in the 1820s and 1830s. At first the U.S. government ignored the requests, and then it proceeded to negotiate a solution directly with Great Britain, without Central American input. In the 1820s, the

United States received and then denied requests for formal alliances with Brazil, Chile, and Colombia and refused to give assurances to Mexico and the Provinces of the Rio de la Plata (which would later become Argentina and Uruguay) that the United States would guarantee protection under the Monroe Doctrine.

In general, the United States had little strategic or economic interest in South America in the first half of the nineteenth century, and there was little reason to enforce the Monroe Doctrine. For example, the British, French, and Portuguese were more active in trade with Argentina and Brazil. For the most part, the United States focused on Mexico and the Caribbean, which were closer geographically and therefore more important economically and strategically. Not until the turn of the twentieth century, when the United States had become an industrial power, did its attention begin to include the entire region, and even then the northern parts of Latin America remained the most vital.

In mid-century, by contrast, U.S. diplomatic officials considered much of Latin America to be hopeless. In 1846 Henry Wise, the U.S. Minister to Brazil, had this to say about regional efforts at creating a Congress such as that proposed to Simón Bolívar (who had died in 1830):

And I am sorry to say that the opinion I have formed of the Spanish provinces forbids me to hope anything from their union, wisdom, capacity of self-government or any other virtue out of which any good could be expected, or to which the United States ought to think of committing themselves.²¹

This paternalistic view of Latin America did not fade for many years. It is true, though, that nationalism as well as domestic conflict did prove an obstacle to the formation of effective Latin American regional institutions. That is why the liberal institutional perspective is less important until the second half of the twentieth century.

The most egregious flouting of the Monroe Doctrine occurred between 1862 and 1867, when France invaded Mexico and even installed an emperor—Maximilian—to rule. In fact, some Mexican elites had been searching Europe for an available monarch and finally through France found their candidate. For Napoleon III (the nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte), it was an opportunity to seize Mexican customs houses and thereby force repayment of loans to French creditors (clamoring for their money, along with Spanish and British creditors). With the backing of the French army, which had been sent two years earlier to pave his way, Maximilian arrived in Mexico City in 1864. Celebrations of Cinco de Mayo (which tend to be more popular, though much less understood, in the United States than in Mexico) in fact go back to a battle on May 5, 1862, when a Mexican force (which included future presidents Benito Juárez and Porfirio Díaz) in Fort Guadalupe repelled a French attack. The French went on to win, but that was beside the point.

Despite the invasion, the United States made minimal protests. President Abraham Lincoln told the Mexican minister that in the case of European aggression, the United States would not be in a position to come to Mexico's aid. Domestic issues were more important. Given the outbreak of civil war, the United States could ill afford to have France recognize and supply the Confederacy, so Lincoln preferred to remain neutral. Only after the civil war ended did the United States turn its attention to Mexico, and rumors of intervention flew. Action by the U.S. government was concentrated on pressuring France to withdraw, even with hints of war. Ultimately, Mexican soldiers themselves did much of the job. In 1867, shortly after the last French troops left, Maximilian was executed, and the experiment was over.

War with Mexico

As the newly formed Latin American nations struggled to define their politics and even their borders, the United States remained restless, constantly looking to the west. The term "Manifest Destiny" was attributed to a newspaper reporter in 1845, but it reflected a belief that had been present for decades, namely, that the true destiny of the United States was to continue westward expansion. Beyond the mystical imagery, however, the expansion of economic and military power was also important. Control over the west would fortify the country and make it far stronger economically. Utilizing the U.S. military to achieve such goals seemed wholly appropriate to U.S. policy makers.

It was well known that many indigenous peoples and Mexicans lived in those territories, but this was no obstacle. Those "heathens" would be "civilized" or simply moved out of the way. Politicians and the general public alike embraced the concept of Manifest Destiny, believing it divinely inspired and self-evident to boot. The former viewed it as a way to increase their political power (creating new states, of course, also immediately became wrapped up in the debate over slavery), and the latter saw an opportunity to make their fortunes. The west was sparsely populated and virtually lawless, given the weak Mexican government. Why not just take it?

For years, U.S. presidents had sent representatives to Mexico with the goal of purchasing part of it. In the years following independence, the United States floated offers of \$1 million to move the border to the Rio Grande. These offers were always rejected, and Mexican leaders became concerned about the many settlers moving in from the southern and eastern United States, the majority of whom stayed in Texas. The infamous battle of the Alamo in 1836, in which General Antonio López de Santa Anna wiped out a force of Texans who had declared Texas's independence, symbolized the deteriorating Anglo-Mexican relationship. (Several months later, the Texans won several decisive battles, even capturing Santa Anna.) The following year,

the United States recognized the independence of Texas, and subsequently debate arose about incorporating Texas as a new state.

Although liberals in Mexico tended to be more sympathetic to the United States and viewed it as a political and economic model, by the 1840s Mexicans of all political stripes became more united as U.S. annexation of Texas seemed increasingly likely. The religious and racial superiority expressed in Manifest Destiny troubled even liberals, who had come to view it as an attempt to exterminate Hispanic culture. They emphasized how Mexican culture was more civilized than that in the United States, especially given the abolition of slavery in Mexico.

In 1844, James Polk was elected president, and he came to office with the publicly stated goal of reacquiring Texas, which, as part of the 1819 Adams–de Onís Treaty, remained in Spanish (and then Mexican) hands, though its Anglo residents had declared an independent republic. The following year, the U.S. Congress formally asked Texas if it wished to join the Union, an offer that was accepted. The idea of annexing Texas had been raised in the past (John Quincy Adams had tried to acquire it from Spain in 1819 and then wanted to buy it from Mexico), but because it would become a slave state, Northerners had resisted the decision for decades. Gradually, Texas became entwined with the rest of the west and the realization of Manifest Destiny. Shifting political alliances within the United States continued to provide majorities in Congress that supported and funded the entire project.

The United States thus annexed Texas in 1845, which only increased its thirst for pushing west all the way to the Pacific Ocean. At the same time, Mexican leaders were angered by the loss of the Texas territory, as well as the Polk administration’s request for even more territory. The combination of these factors led to war. What is now generally known in the United States as the Mexican–American War was then popularly known as “Mr. Polk’s War.” In Mexico, it is “the War of the Northern Aggression” or “the War of the United States against Mexico.”

The war with Mexico lasted two years and ended in 1848 with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. For \$15 million, the United States took possession of the west (see Figure 2.2). The Rio Grande became the southern border with Mexico, and everything north of the river and west of Texas was then part of the United States. In a short span of time, Mexico had lost approximately half its land (though only a small percentage of the total Mexican population resided there, which is why the United States wanted it) and rich natural resources. Discussions had emerged in the United States about pushing even further south into Mexico, but they stalled because there was no appetite within the U.S. Congress for bringing a large population of Mexicans into the Union. The Gadsden Purchase of 1853, through which the United States purchased what would become southern Arizona and New Mexico, finalized the transfer of land.

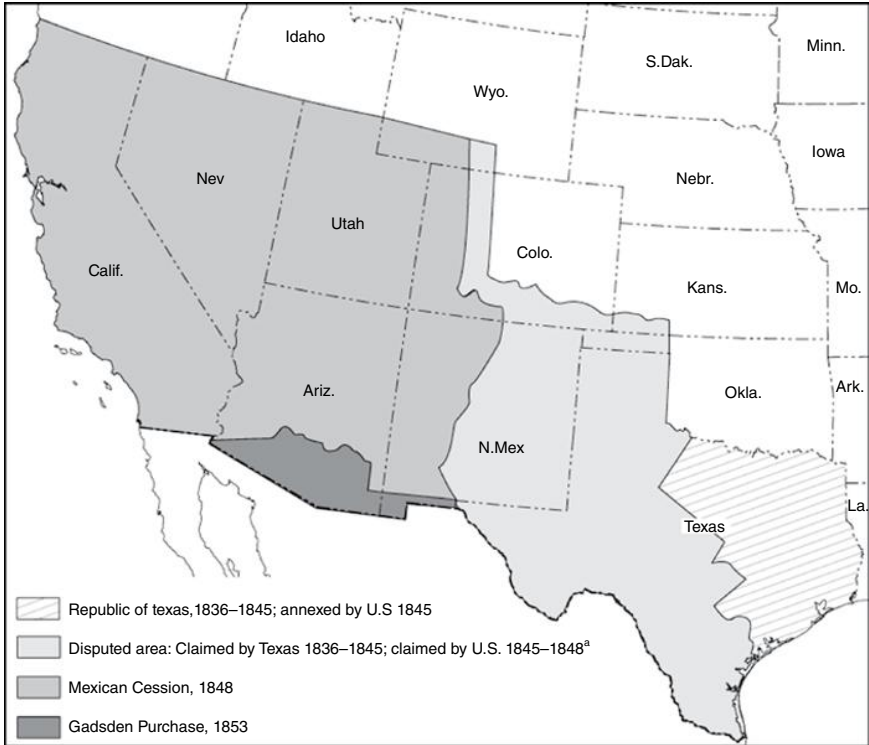


Figure 2.2 Land redistribution from the 1853 Gadsden Purchase and earlier 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

The United States was triumphant and even self-congratulatory. In his widely used 1943 text on U.S.–Latin American relations, Samuel Bemis wrote, “The United States acquired the whole western territory from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean without unjustly despoiling any civilized nation, and this statement holds good for the war with Mexico.”²² However, Mexicans, who felt both civilized and despoiled, carried resentment that only slowly faded and has never disappeared. In 2001, the General Accounting Office of the United States began an investigation into Mexican land claims that were legally protected by the 1848 treaty but were subsequently ignored. Violence periodically erupted over land ownership disputes, as descendants of Mexicans who lived in the territories produce pre-1848 land grants demonstrating their claims. Mexican concepts of security, therefore, have always been highly attuned to the United States.

The war took a considerable toll on Mexico, which would plunge into civil war as political divisions and mutual blaming—already a serious problem—became ever more bitter. Chronic instability would eventually contribute to the French invasion, as exasperated conservative elites invited an updated

colonialism. For their part, liberals began a series of reforms in 1857 that blamed the clergy, the military, and indigenous populations for Mexico's inability to defend itself. Civil conflict would eventually result in the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz.

Box 2.2 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848)

The United States of America and the United Mexican States animated by a sincere desire to put an end to the calamities of the war which unhappily exists between the two Republics and to establish Upon a solid basis relations of peace and friendship, which shall confer reciprocal benefits upon the citizens of both, and assure the concord, harmony, and mutual confidence wherein the two people should live, as good neighbors have for that purpose appointed their respective plenipotentiaries ... Who, after a reciprocal communication of their respective full powers, have, under the protection of Almighty God, the author of peace, arranged, agreed upon, and signed the following: Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Limits, and Settlement between the United States of America and the Mexican Republic.

Article V

The boundary line between the two Republics shall commence in the Gulf of Mexico, three leagues from land, opposite the mouth of the Rio Grande, otherwise called Rio Bravo del Norte, or Opposite the mouth of its deepest branch, if it should have more than one branch emptying directly into the sea; from thence up the middle of that river, following the deepest channel, where it has more than one, to the point where it strikes the southern boundary of New Mexico; thence, westwardly, along the whole southern boundary of New Mexico (which runs north of the town called Paso) to its western termination; thence, northward, along the western line of New Mexico, until it intersects the first branch of the river Gila; (or if it should not intersect any branch of that river, then to the point on the said line nearest to such branch, and thence in a direct line to the same); thence down the middle of the said branch and of the said river, until it empties into the Rio Colorado; thence across the Rio Colorado, following the division line between Upper and Lower California, to the Pacific Ocean.

Article XI

Considering that a great part of the territories, which, by the present treaty, are to be comprehended for the future within the limits of the United States, is now occupied by savage tribes, who will hereafter be

under the exclusive control of the Government of the United States, and whose incursions within the territory of Mexico would be prejudicial in the extreme, it is solemnly agreed that all such incursions shall be forcibly restrained by the Government of the United States whensoever this may be necessary; and that when they cannot be prevented, they shall be punished by the said Government, and satisfaction for the same shall be exacted all in the same way, and with equal diligence and energy, as if the same incursions were meditated or committed within its own territory, against its own citizens.

Article XII

In consideration of the extension acquired by the boundaries of the United States, as defined in the fifth article of the present treaty, the Government of the United States engages to pay to that of the Mexican Republic the sum of fifteen millions of dollars.

Source: <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=26&page=transcript>

Building a Canal

Although the war with Mexico is the most famous example of Manifest Destiny in action, it appeared in other ways as well. For example, in the 1850s the United States began a comprehensive land survey of all Latin America that was part of an overall plan to expand railroads for commerce. In addition, immediately after the war, in the eyes of U.S. policy makers the new extension of the United States required a transport route to connect the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. Railways were not yet widespread and, in any case, were extremely slow, so a canal cut through a Central American country would serve perfectly as a route. Several locations in the isthmus of Central America were promising, but Great Britain still had more naval power and economic presence there than the United States.

For the United States, the strategic and economic importance of such a canal spurred an effort to come to an agreement with Britain about its potential construction. At that time, neither country yet had the political will to begin the project, which would be a massive undertaking, but the threat that Britain might build a canal and control the crossing alarmed U.S. administrations. In 1850, the two sides signed the Clayton–Bulwer Treaty (named for the U.S. secretary of state and the British minister to the United States). The two countries agreed that if a canal were built, neither side would have exclusive control over it; that they would agree not to “occupy, or fortify, or colonize, or assume, or exercise any dominion over Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the Mosquito coast, or any part of

Central America”; and that together they would guarantee its neutrality.²³ In one sense, this represented a diplomatic victory for the United States because it symbolized a real block on British power, which at the time was still considerable.

The treaty obviously violated the spirit of the Monroe Doctrine by acceding to British influence in Central America, and the administration of Zachary Taylor received heavy domestic criticism. But with civil war clearly on the horizon, many in the administration and Congress believed that other issues were far more pressing and so were content with the agreement. The treaty would remain in force for another fifty years, until President Theodore Roosevelt decided to seize land and build a canal.

The treaty was remarkable for its intentional neglect of those countries that might house the canal. Whether the final location would be Nicaragua or Panama (which was still northern Colombia), the attitude of those governments was not considered in the writing of the treaty. That the land could be had was taken for granted. Several times already, when faced with a perceived European threat in Latin America, the United States had met only with representatives of the European country. This strategy was subsequently repeated many times.

Even before the existence of a canal, transit through the isthmus had become a matter of national security. The United States landed troops in Panama in 1856 to protect U.S. citizens; this became known as the “watermelon war,” because a Panamanian vendor attacked a drunken traveler who refused to pay for a slice of watermelon and the fight became a riot. According to a British prime minister, referring to U.S. interest in the area, “These Yankees are most disagreeable fellows to have to do with about any American Question; They are on the spot, strong, deeply interested in the matter, totally unscrupulous and dishonest and determined somehow or other to carry their Point.”²⁴

Panamanians often agreed. In 1850, Colombia offered concessions to a U.S. company to build a railroad in what would become Panama to accommodate the large number of people who were traveling from the east coast of the United States to California’s gold fields. The result was not only profit but also de facto political control. Private soldiers of fortune replaced national police, and U.S. troops routinely landed in response to disorder, all of which clearly violated the Clayton–Bulwer Treaty. From a realist perspective, the U.S. government believed private citizens could contribute to the expansion of U.S. power and economic welfare, and so they were encouraged. From the Panamanian perspective, the railroad had brought some measure of prosperity, but that accrued mostly to foreigners, and along with it came unemployment (many foreign workers, such as Africans, Chinese, and Irish, were imported to build the railroad), racial violence (including lynchings), inflation, and ever more exotic diseases. The state of U.S.–Panamanian relations remained uneasy. The relationship with Colombia was less troublesome for the time

being, as successive Colombian governments received payments through the agreements the U.S. companies had signed. Relations between Panama and Bogotá worsened, however.

The foundations of Manifest Destiny also seemed to encourage adventurers and filibusterers (defined as those who raise private armies to take action in a foreign country) lured westward with dreams of riches, who soon discovered that mining was backbreaking and often yielded nothing. Filibusterers saw in Latin America a combination of investment opportunity and weak states. The most prominent of these wanderers was William Walker, who actually became president of Nicaragua in 1855. In the 1850s he went west, but instead of seeking gold started a colony in Baja California and proclaimed it independent of Mexico in 1853 (with Ensenada as the capital). Given its shaky relationship with Mexico, the U.S. government shut down his recruitment office in San Francisco and arrested him when he came back to the United States the following year. Undaunted and out of jail, he was invited by Nicaraguan Liberals to take their side in the country's civil war and went there with a force of soldiers for hire. Joining forces with Nicaraguans, they took the capital in 1855.

The two factions soon began to see that their dispute was less important than the fact that a Yanqui was gaining control of the country. Even other countries, such as Costa Rica, sent troops to force him out. Trying for the appearance of legitimacy, Walker held a fraudulent election and made himself president, even though the Nicaraguan constitution clearly stated that the president must be native-born. A Southerner by birth, he announced the reestablishment of slavery, which brought in money from Southern investors, but widespread opposition ultimately led to his defeat in 1857. In that sense, filibustering itself can be considered intermestic because it was driven in no small part by southern support for new slave territories. Concerned over antagonizing the United States, Nicaraguan leaders allowed Walker to return to United States, where he was treated like a popular hero. In fact, a virulently racist Broadway musical, *Nicaragua, or General Walker's Victories*, celebrated his exploits. He met his demise in 1860, when, yet again, he returned to Central America and fought for control of a Honduran port. Chased into the jungle, he was cornered and shot. By that point, he was so discredited that the *New York Tribune* made note of his death by saying he was "insane," while President Buchanan called his demise a "happy change."²⁵

The entire sordid episode demonstrates not only the disdain of some U.S. citizens for Latin American sovereignty, but also another contribution to the persistent suspicion and distrust that permeated U.S.-Latin American relations. From the Nicaraguan perspective, it did not matter whether the U.S. government was directly involved or not. Walker received money from the United States, he was never effectively deterred, and so he seemed just another part of a U.S. plan to dominate the region.

A New York congressman succinctly summed up the reaction of U.S. politicians: "We northern Democrats believe that the Government should, by conquest, do certain things; but that this business of Walker was committing petty larceny. We northern Democrats are rather in favor of national grand larceny."²⁶

In Nicaragua, the Walker episode had several effects. Liberals' support for him discredited their party, thus ushering in a relatively stable (though not democratic) period of conservative rule in Nicaraguan politics. The backlash against the United States took the concrete form of leading Nicaraguan governments to attract French investment for a canal. Only when that effort failed did a French company go to Panama instead, where in 1878 it signed a contract and began work. Chapter 3 discusses how the United States bought out the company and continued the work.

One effect of Manifest Destiny was to reveal the difficulties Latin American countries had in confronting U.S. exercises of power. Even though the United States was not yet a global military power, the fractious nature of Latin American politics precluded any concerted effort to develop a strong response. Internal order was such a high priority that the United States was able to play off different sides for its own gain.

Summary and Conclusion

During this initial period, after most of Latin America gained its independence from Spain and Portugal, certain patterns emerged that would prove to be durable. In realist terms, the imbalance of power, though not as large as it would be by the end of the nineteenth century, was becoming evident. The United States quickly viewed the area as its domain, pushing Europe out as much as possible while taking some extra land for itself. The U.S. policy makers believed that Latin Americans were not capable of effective self-rule, economic progress, or other signs of "civilization," which made it easy to rationalize any action, whether conquest, subjugation, or intimidation. One result was that Latin American leaders developed a suspicion of U.S. policies and the diplomats who tried to explain them, not to mention the U.S. adventurers who roamed the region of their own accord.

Further, the formulation of U.S. policy was based primarily on a combination of domestic politics and response to European machinations and investment. Especially because politicians did not believe Latin Americans capable of stability, they pursued policy objectives with little or no regard for Latin American opinions. Even clearly stated policies, such as the Monroe Doctrine, were routinely sidestepped if they did not correspond to the current notions of national security.

Instability was a product of political growing pains, as Latin American countries struggled to create new states and to establish authority over them. Suspicions regarding U.S. actions increased, but many leaders periodically still looked to the United States as a potential ally. Both security and economic development depended on domestic order, and it was to that end, and not toward external enemies, that many national resources were dedicated.

The struggle for stability and nationhood drained already weakened economies, thus making it more difficult to establish effective foreign policies. Torn asunder by civil conflict, Latin American countries lacked the resources and stable leadership to counterbalance the growing assertion of U.S. military and economic power. Power would beget power, which U.S. governments were not hesitant to use if (and only if) they believed U.S. security was at stake.

Yet it would not be accurate to assert that the United States dominated the region in the first half of the nineteenth century. Its policies focused primarily on Mexico and the Caribbean. Given its geographical proximity, trade and investment in Central America was growing, but the British remained the region's most important foreign trading partner. In South America, European influence was unquestionably greater than that of the United States. However, beginning mid-century, a slow shift began that would accelerate as the United States industrialized and investors sought out new markets. Even distant South America had tremendous potential, a land of opportunity with a lighter-skinned and therefore more "advanced" population. The Southern Cone (Argentina, southern Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay) could be a "new west" that was ripe for U.S. investment.

We can use dependency theory to analyze those economic realities. The more powerful countries expanded their influence as they industrialized and increasingly viewed Latin America in terms of its abundance of primary products. The lack of capital only added to the development of a dependent economic relationship. Local elites were a critical part of this process, since they benefited greatly if they helped to maintain the order necessary to ensure the continued cheap flow of goods.

Industrialization would thus deepen U.S. interest in Latin America. For decades an agrarian nation, the U.S. economy exploded as the population grew, railroads were laid, and factories were built. Entrepreneurs viewed Latin America as a source of unlimited profit, a bountiful combination of rich natural resources, cheap labor, and governments eager for wealth to come their way. From the perspective of the U.S. government, this investment was essential for the economic prosperity of the United States, and presidents were responsive to any flash of Latin American nationalism that might endanger them. The era of dollar diplomacy was underway, which is explained in Chapter 3.

Research Questions

1. To what degree did the U.S. Constitution and its framers influence the development of Latin American constitutions? In what key ways were the two political models different, and why?
2. Assess the relative importance of domestic and international factors in the U.S. decision to grant diplomatic recognition to the newly independent Latin American states.
3. Why did President Monroe create his doctrine? How can we measure the effects?
4. How did the newly independent countries of Latin America respond to the Monroe Doctrine? To what degree did regional differences in response exist?
5. Compare and contrast the political and economic influence of the United States in Central America and the Caribbean versus that in South America.

Notes

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- 3 Robertson 1967, 73.
- 4 Quoted in Schoultz 1998, 5.
- 5 Gleijeses 1992.
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- Schultz, Lars. *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy toward Latin America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998). This book details the attitudes of U.S. policy makers since Latin American independence, which provides rich and often amusing narrative on the dismissive and superior attitude that those policy makers have held. It is well written and an excellent historical guide. In addition, there is a very large companion bibliography at <http://www.unc.edu/~schultz/bibliography.html>

Websites

- American Diplomacy 1778 to the Present: Treaties, Agreements and Correspondence.** This is the Avalon Project of Yale Law School, which contains the full text of many written agreements between Latin American countries and the United States. A large number of them are from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/amerdipl.asp
- Constitutions of the Americas.** Offered online through Georgetown University, the website contains the text of every Latin American constitution. The only drawback arises if you do not read Spanish, because they are all in their original form, but it is possible to utilize an online translator (such as BabelFish at <http://www.babelfish.com>) that can transform each document into English. <http://pdba.georgetown.edu/constitutions/constitutions.html>

The Mexican–American War and the Media. From the Department of History at Virginia Tech, this site is a collection of newspaper articles from the United States and Britain of the time, as well as timelines, images, and links to the documents associated with the war. It does not devote much attention to the Mexican side. For further research, it also provides links to extensive bibliographies: <http://www.history.vt.edu/MxAmWar/INDEX.HTM>

Invasión Yanqui: The Mexican War. This more pro-Mexican site is presented by the Texas Council for the Humanities Resource Center and contains images, commentary, essays, and bibliographical links. <http://www.humanitiestexas.org/news/events/invasi%C3%B3n-yanqui-us-mexican-war-1846%E2%80%931848>

The Rise of U.S. Hegemony

Timeline

- 1889** First Pan American Conference
- 1891** USS Baltimore incident in Chile
- 1895** Olney Doctrine announced
- 1896** Calvo Clause
- 1898** Spanish–American War
- 1899** United Fruit Company is formed
- 1901** Hay–Pauncefote Treaty
- 1901** U.S. Congress passes the Platt Amendment
- 1903** Panama becomes independent from Colombia

Following the Civil War, the United States began to industrialize in earnest, and the government followed a largely laissez-faire economic strategy to encourage economic growth. It was a time when investors such as Carnegie, Rockefeller, and Vanderbilt became immensely wealthy through a combination of shrewd investment, ruthless treatment of competitors and labor, and a constant eye toward new opportunities. Industrialization, which entailed factories as well as railroads to transport the products coming almost constantly out the factory doors, created a seemingly never-ending need for raw materials. The ability to maintain wealth itself, meanwhile, required new opportunities beyond the borders of the United States. Latin America, with its relatively untapped resources and proximity, seemed to represent a perfect avenue. Soon the U.S. government would begin using force to pursue

economic and political interests. This chapter concludes at the turn of the twentieth century, when the era of intervention began in earnest.

The U.S. domestic market was becoming saturated. Despite industrialization, the U.S. economy suffered periodic depressions—one in each of the last three decades of the nineteenth century. The panic associated with the first economic slowdown after the Civil War led to a new interest in pursuing foreign markets, and that interest would continue growing. By 1881, newspapers had begun arguing that South America was “the great market for our surplus manufactures ... [which] lies at our door neglected,” and a steel industry publication informed the U.S. State Department that the government should “see to it” that steel had adequate foreign markets.¹ What was good for business was good for the country, and so the U.S. government would begin exerting its diplomatic, economic, and military leverage in new ways.

The term “dollar diplomacy” would become widely used in the early twentieth century, but its seeds had been sown much earlier. In practice, it meant a symbiotic relationship between government and business, to the point that the U.S. government would use private economic interests as rationale for policy toward Latin America, particularly with regard to debt repayment. Investors would help spread U.S. political influence, while U.S. policy would reflect their needs. The emphasis on national security had not disappeared, but the threats to U.S. borders were less dire than in the past.

For these reasons, dependency theory has much to say about the era. In a study of Central America, Lester Langley and Thomas Schoonover argue the following:

The comprador elite, consisting of representatives of the small professional and artisan class as well as the socially prominent, permitted foreign interests to maximize their production of wealth. After the 1870s, metropole influence spread into all areas of Central American life: education, the professions, the military, local administration, and even public service.²

Nonetheless, realist propositions are also compelling. Economic expansion can be seen as one element in an overall project to expand U.S. influence. Policy in Latin American countries also reflected a conscious effort to resist U.S. hegemony, both politically and militarily.

Political leaders in Latin America were struggling to recover from civil wars, liberal-conservative conflict, economic crises, bickering between capitals and outlying areas, border disputes, and other common problems facing the first few generations of newly independent states. They had neither the unified political support nor the military strength required to counter U.S. influence. At times, in fact, they welcomed it. Much of the political unrest revolved around the persistent battles between liberals and conservatives, and those groups out of power would often appeal to the United States for assistance. Some political and economic elites had much to gain by a U.S.

presence, which could bring stability and profit. The United States stepped neatly and easily into this political maelstrom.

Meanwhile, in part precisely because Latin American politics was so unpredictable, U.S. views of Latin Americans had not changed significantly, if at all. President Ulysses S. Grant's minister to Central America referred to Nicaragua's foreign minister as a "mendacious negro statesman."³ According to Secretary of State James Blaine, Latin Americans "require external pressure to keep them from war; when at war they require external pressure to bring them to peace."⁴ The U.S. policy was often framed in paternalistic terms, with Latin Americans portrayed as unruly children who at times needed a whipping.

With the exceptions of Great Britain, Spain, and to some degree Germany, Europe was generally easing itself out of the region. Table 3.1 compares the growth of U.S., British, and German trade. In relative terms, U.S. trade with Latin America in 1890 was not dominant and in some cases lagged behind, whereas in two more decades it had expanded considerably.

After the Mexico debacle, French interest was limited to economic enterprise, including an unsuccessful private-sector stab at building a canal through Panama. Spain was pouring resources into Cuba as colonial unrest became more violent. The Ten Years' War (1868–78) had wreaked havoc on the island

Table 3.1 External Trade with Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States (in current values, millions of dollars), 1890 and 1913

<i>Country</i>	<i>1890 (Import/Export)</i>	<i>Trading Partners</i>	<i>1913 (Import/Export)</i>
Argentina	12/12	Germany	84/62
	58/19	UK	154/129
	9.3/6.1	US	73/25
Chile	16/6.4	Germany	81/84
	29/46	UK	99/153
	5.2/8.5	US	55/83
Colombia	1,636/2,475	Germany	4/3.2
	4,990/4,835	UK	5.8/5.6
	1,218/4,636	US	7.6/19
Costa Rica	1,262/-	Germany	2.9/1.1
	1,449/-	UK	2.8/9.3
	2,225/-	US	9.6/11
Mexico	3.7/1.7	Germany	25/16
	8.5/14	UK	26/31
	29/43	US	97/232
Uruguay	2.8/1	Germany	7.8/13
	8.8/3.9	UK	12/7.7
	2.4/2	US	6.4/2.8

Source: *International Historical Statistics: The Americas, 1750–1993*, 4th edn (New York: Stockton Press, 1998).

and seriously damaged Spanish and U.S. economic interests. As in the past, however, the U.S. government was less concerned about the Spanish presence than it was about other foreigners who might take advantage of the situation.

Central America and the Pursuit of a Canal

Because of geography, the focus of U.S. policy only gradually moved southward, and the developments that led up to the construction of a canal in Panama highlight the imbalance of power and the readiness of the U.S. government to wield military power for its interests. United States policy toward Central America reflected a combination of economic opportunism and national security, because it was the route between the oceans and had long been dominated by Great Britain. There was also a significant German economic presence in Guatemala. Presidents and their secretaries of state openly insisted that no European power be allowed to control a canal. After the French began construction in 1879, President Rutherford B. Hayes stated, "The policy of this country is a canal under American control."⁵ Nicaragua received the lion's share of attention regarding a canal, and over the years a variety of agreements surfaced but for various reasons (such as U.S. unwillingness to commit itself to maintaining order) did not come to fruition.

As the idea of a canal became more popular, U.S. policy makers promoted political stability in Central America to foster investment and security. The battles between liberals and conservatives were still hard fought and bitter, with conservatives more skeptical of a U.S. presence. Stepping into this political whirlwind, U.S. diplomats announced that only a union of Central American countries could effectively solve the problem. Simón Bolívar had dreamed of such a union, and now his old nemesis was actively encouraging it.

Unfortunately, the United States ran into the same obstacles that Bolívar had experienced. In particular, Central American countries were strongly nationalistic, and many were simply unwilling to give up sovereignty to some central political body. Interstate conflicts were common, which in the minds of many Central American leaders underlined the continued need for national armies and secure borders. The combination of liberal-conservative disputes with the widely different national goals of five countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua) precluded any lasting union.

Despite these persistent failures, U.S. policy makers continued to view Central America as an important area for U.S. economic expansion. When depression hit the United States in 1873, President Grant and his minister to Central America (a title demonstrating the hope of a united region) worked with Central American liberals to build railroads for the transit of goods, to provide concessions for U.S. business, and to exclude Europe as much as possible. Once the economy of the United States recovered, investment in Central America grew. Coffee was the largest industry, but a host of other

agricultural sectors, such as sugar, cotton, chicle, cocoa, rubber, and timber (including expensive woods like mahogany, cedar, and rosewood), came under the control of U.S. businesses. Fruit, which would later be a foundation for dollar diplomacy, was not yet a cash crop. Difficulties in transportation, unpredictable weather, and political instability limited profits until later in the nineteenth century. The banana, introduced to U.S. markets in 1866, for years remained a curiosity rather than the diet staple it is today.

Despite the expansion of U.S. investment in Central America, the prospect of a canal was always the main priority of U.S. policy. Presidents mentioned it regularly in speeches, and Central America as a whole would not receive such concentrated and public attention again until Marxist-inspired revolutions swept the region in the 1970s and 1980s. President Grant stated in 1869 that a canal was essential to U.S. security and established a commission to investigate a possible Panama route. In 1880, President Hayes announced that if any existing treaty (i.e., Clayton–Bulwer) stood in the way of U.S. control, then the treaty needed to be renegotiated. In his inaugural address of 1881, James Garfield said that he agreed with his predecessor and would act to promote U.S. interests in a canal.

The possible locations for a canal had been narrowed to Nicaragua and Panama, with Costa Rica a distant third. All involved felt that the presidents and congresses of the two countries could be convinced to accept U.S. dominance over a canal zone. At times, agreements with Nicaragua reached advanced stages, foundering only on the unwillingness of the U.S. Congress to commit to the protection of Nicaraguan sovereignty. The stickier problem was the British reaction, because the Clayton–Bulwer Treaty clearly stated that the United States could not build a canal without British participation. Consequently, years of negotiation by different U.S. presidents and secretaries of state centered on eliminating Clayton–Bulwer. The treaty could not be unilaterally abrogated without risking a backlash, but every effort was made to find legal loopholes that would convince the British government that it was null and void. This effort required considerable legal gymnastics. For example, Secretary of State Blaine argued that when the treaty was written, the United States had assumed that any canal would be built with British financial assistance, and since the United States no longer needed British help, the treaty was invalid. No one had ever made such an assumption formally, but according to Blaine, it was “inferable from every line of it.”²⁶ Needless to say, such arguments did not convince anyone, and the British made it clear that they expected full compliance with the treaty.

Promotion of a U.S.-controlled canal dovetailed with commerce. When liberal governments began retaking power in Central America in the 1880s (or even earlier in some cases), they were eager to attract foreign capital. Using strategies that would be copied even into the twenty-first century, they offered tax breaks, legal exemptions, promises of docile labor, and similar incentives to entice investment. From the perspective of U.S. investors, such

concessions were the only way to offset other costs, including lack of infrastructure, unpredictable and sometimes violent weather, political instability, disease, and a workforce that did not always remain content with low wages and miserable working conditions. Soon foreign companies (primarily from the United States and Great Britain) dominated not only commerce but also banking and owned increasing acreage of arable land.

At the end of the nineteenth century, a multitude of pressures began pushing U.S. policy makers to the more active pursuit of a canal. Along with increased investment, vocal proponents—most prominently future president Theodore Roosevelt—of increased naval power gained influence, and a canal would be essential for naval strength in both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Meanwhile, competition from outside the hemisphere was fading fast. Once the efforts of a French entrepreneur, Ferdinand de Lesseps, to build a canal failed, the French government's interest also evaporated. De Lesseps had formed a corporation, begun work, and then gone bankrupt. Great Britain was in the process of disengaging from Central America, even on the Miskito Coast of Nicaragua, where it had been active for years. The costs of maintaining the British Empire elsewhere in the world made Central America a much lower priority.

These events left the United States with three objectives to accomplish: First, choose a canal site. Second, by some means, gain control of that site. Third, negotiate a new agreement with Britain to be rid of the Clayton–Bulwer Treaty.

In the late 1880s, the U.S. government commissioned studies to determine the most propitious location for a canal. Soon the British government realized that the United States was determined in its efforts, and that the treaty could become a source of discord. At the time, Britain was facing all the challenges inherent in maintaining an empire, especially in Asia and Africa, as well as potential adversaries in France, Russia, and Germany, and its government was more than willing to remain in the good graces of the United States and avoid an unwanted crisis.

Beginning in 1898, the two countries agreed to replace Clayton–Bulwer, and the details were slowly hammered out over the next three years. The British wanted the canal to be demilitarized (similar to the Suez Canal), but many in the United States (once again most vocally Theodore Roosevelt, then governor of New York) insisted that the United States be allowed to protect a canal by force if necessary. In 1901, the Hay–Pauncefote Treaty found a middle ground, with the language of neutrality but a guarantee of U.S. protection: “The United States ... shall be at liberty to maintain such military police along the canal as may be necessary to protect it against lawlessness and disorder.”⁷ The canal was now officially a United States-only project, and the U.S. government could define “disorder” any way it chose.

In 1901, a U.S. government commission (the Walker Commission, named for its chair, Admiral John G. Walker) recommended Nicaragua as the best

site, and the United States purchased exclusive rights to build for \$5 million. The Panama route had been deemed too expensive because the company in France that owned the rights (de Lesseps's own corporation had gone into receivership, and new investors took control) wanted a large sum to transfer its interests in the venture. Although Costa Rica never received much serious attention, to cover all its bases the United States also bought exclusive rights to any future canal on its territory.

Alarmed by the interest in Nicaragua, the French company that owned rights in Panama cut its asking price, and a second Walker Commission report switched its recommendation to Panama. At the same time, President José Santos Zelaya of Nicaragua was refusing to accept certain conditions that the United States demanded, especially full judicial control in the canal zone. Colombia, on the other hand, which still controlled Panama (as mentioned in Chapter 2), was ready to negotiate that route.

In 1902, the U.S. Congress debated and then passed the Spooner Amendment, which authorized the president to purchase the property and concessions of the French for \$40 million and, only if unsuccessful, to turn to Nicaragua. As usual, the debate barely touched on the effects U.S. action would have on the countries in question. By this time, Theodore Roosevelt was president and—active as ever—he was intent on Panama, so negotiations with Colombia were underway even before congressional debate was finished.

The United States and Colombia came within a hair's breadth of ratifying the Hay–Herrán Treaty, which would have given the United States the rights to a six-mile-wide strip of land in return for an initial lump sum of \$10 million and annual payments of \$250,000. It was ratified by the U.S. Congress in early 1903, but then rejected by the Colombian Congress. That decision was based in part on the mistaken belief that greater financial benefits could be wrangled from the United States and in part as a negative reaction to the landing of U.S. troops in Panama in 1902 without notifying local authorities. Although the Colombian government hoped to renew negotiations, the treaty's rejection cemented in Roosevelt's mind the need for intervention.

Very quickly, Roosevelt and his advisors came up with justifications for violating Colombian sovereignty. Most important, they claimed, was that the canal was not being built for profit but for the benefit of all humankind. They argued that it would also serve to bring civilization to Panama and respect for human rights (both of which would be learned through the presence of U.S. citizens), which was important because, according to Roosevelt, Colombians were “of fatuous weakness, of dismal ignorance, cruelty, treachery, greed, and utter vanity.”⁸ Finally, the United States said it had been protecting Colombian sovereignty, Colombia had benefited from that protection, and therefore it was in no position to block the canal. This tortured logic prompted the Roosevelt administration to precipitate a Panamanian uprising against Colombia.

Roosevelt wasted little time. Panamanians had long resented Colombian rule and did not need much encouragement to expand their fight for independence. In November 1903, the uprising began, and the U.S. Navy was instructed to prevent Colombian forces from arriving. Once again, the argument went that a canal would benefit the entire world and civilization in general, so it was unacceptable to allow the Colombian government to interfere, even when it was simply attempting to maintain its sovereignty.

Panamanian “independence” came only two days later. The United States immediately recognized the new government and began writing a treaty. The Hay–Bunau-Varilla Treaty was written in New York City without any representatives from Panama (in fact, they were on their way by boat at the time the treaty was signed). The terms were the same as Hay–Herrán, except the canal zone would be ten miles wide instead of only six. As plans for construction began, the United States also successfully pressured the new Panamanian president to disband the army; the United States would be protecting the country’s sovereignty, the argument went, so an army would only be a hindrance. Moreover, as President Taft stated in 1906, the United States desired to “advise all political parties in the Republic of Panama that in order to avoid obstruction to the building of the canal, the United States will not permit revolutions in that republic.”⁹ That was that.

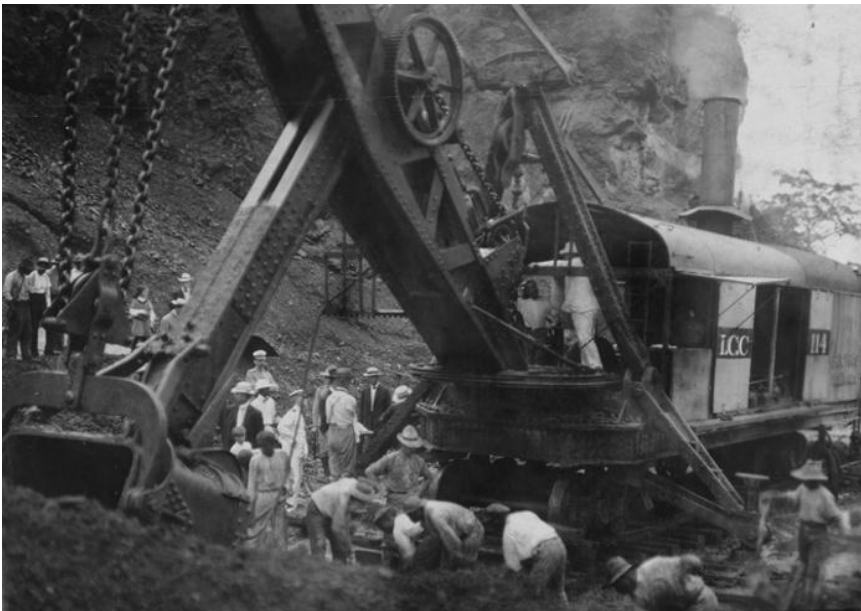


Figure 3.1 Building the Panama Canal. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. ppmsca 36700. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/ppmsca.36700>

Combining the French and U.S. periods of construction, over 20,000 workers coming from all over the world died, from disease (especially during the French period) but also accidents. The canal they completed, however, was impressive. The first ship passed through the canal in 1914, and from that moment onward, the entire area was central to U.S. security. An attack on the canal would mean a serious disruption of trade. For the entire twentieth century, the administration of the canal would be a source of tension between the United States and Panama, marked by strenuous Panamanian efforts to take greater control of its operation.

U.S. Investment and “Banana Republics”

Given the governments' efforts to develop rapidly with the help of foreign capital, debt was piling up in all of Central America. Investors wielded tremendous political and economic influence, because the debt prompted foreign governments to send troops as a means of forcing repayment. Domestic industry was barely forming, and this economic penetration left Central American governments heavily dependent on a continued flow of foreign capital. The most famous example of dependence and control is the fruit industry. By the 1880s, bananas and other exotic fruits had become profitable in U.S. markets, and several companies had gradually bought extensive tracts of land in Central America and the Caribbean. In 1899, the two largest companies merged and became United Fruit Company.

United Fruit built its own railroads, steamships, housing, schools, radio, and telegraph and was always adept at either currying favor with the government in power or, if the government did not prove pliable enough, working with the opposition. Given its rapid growth, it also attracted attention from the U.S. political elite, and over time some highly influential policy makers would be United Fruit stockholders or even directors. Within Central America, the company would become a negative symbol of U.S. imperialism.

Nevertheless, Central American governments often supported United Fruit. It was building infrastructure, it was combating disease (which had always plagued previous efforts to increase worker productivity), and, despite generous exemptions, it provided badly needed tax revenue. Over time, the costs would prove to be very high, but at least initially the company was bringing in capital and expertise that did not exist locally.

O. Henry's 1904 novel *Cabbages and Kings*, set in a fictional Central American country, introduced the term “banana republic.” It refers to “this small, maritime banana republic” and how these small “nations play at government and intrigue until someday a big, silent gunboat glides into the offing and warns them not to break their toys.”¹⁰ Such was banana diplomacy.

Debt and Intervention

Countless other U.S. companies established themselves in Central America, and the issue of debt became more and more prominent. Failure (or refusal) to pay debt had become tantamount to a direct insult to the United States. In Nicaragua, President José Santos Zelaya discovered this the hard way. On the sparsely populated Atlantic coast of Nicaragua, the Miskito Indians were granted autonomy from the central government (an arrangement similar to reservations in the United States, though with more authority for self-rule), and by the 1890s the area had also become popular for U.S. investors and traders, who soon outnumbered the British who had been active there for decades. The Miskito coast was particularly attractive because to the extent that local government existed, it had lax regulations and tax codes and did not answer to authorities in the faraway Nicaraguan capital of Managua.

President Zelaya rued the amount of revenue that his government was unable to collect. His nationalist attitude sparked conflict with the United States, as would altercations (including shootings) between Nicaraguans and U.S. citizens in Bluefields, the main town on the Miskito coast. The situation deteriorated further in 1894, when, in response to a Honduran invasion, Zelaya imposed martial law in Bluefields and began imposing (or simply enforcing) taxes. The Miskito Indians were soon compelled to accept Nicaraguan rule, but the stage had been set for a showdown with the United States.

Zelaya's intransigence irritated U.S. businessmen, who in the 1890s were coming to Bluefields for the banana and mahogany industries. They did what they could to aid a rebellion in 1899, but to their dismay Zelaya was successful in putting down the revolt. The U.S. minister reported that U.S. businessmen "have many complaints of long standing against the Zelaya government" and "desire aggressive action, aided by [U.S.] military power, which is not permissible under present conditions."¹¹ However, their complaints would not reach a consistently sympathetic presidential ear until Theodore Roosevelt took office.

Nicaragua is the perfect example of the evolution of the U.S. response to crises involving U.S. citizens. In the 1890s, warships off the coast of Bluefields were a not uncommon sight, as the U.S. government sent a visible reminder that the Nicaraguan authorities had better treat U.S. citizens well or suffer the consequences. The principle of using military force to back up investment had become so vexing to Latin Americans that Carlos Calvo, a noted Argentine legal scholar, developed what became known as the Calvo Clause, a legal doctrine insisting that no government should intervene in another country's affairs for the purposes of protecting its own citizens. Because Argentina had suffered foreign intervention and also had aspirations to become a hemispheric leader, its intellectuals developed concepts in international law intended to limit foreign (especially U.S.) intervention. In some countries, the Calvo Clause would be translated into the practice of using

contractual clauses by which foreigners would agree not to call on their own government for aid. Even in countries such as Nicaragua that did not commonly utilize such a clause, the general idea was the same. The United States had become more active in its foreign policy, and Latin American governments were beginning to resist it.

The Evolution of Cuban “Independence”

The Caribbean was also a central concern to U.S. policy makers, as developments in Cuba appeared to pose a potentially serious security threat. For Creoles, if not the rest of the population, the 1868 Cuban declaration of war against Spain included the goal of annexation to the United States. Creoles hoped to copy the example of Texas, a sovereign government that willingly became a U.S. state. Such efforts were doomed, however, by U.S. unwillingness not only to annex a slave state (now impossible after the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, adopted in 1865) but also to assimilate a nonwhite population. As this unwillingness became clear, Cuban interest in joining the United States decreased because the only viable means would be as a protectorate, and Cuba would neither be sovereign nor a state. During the Ten Years’ War, the U.S. government maintained its position of support for Spain and became disgruntled by damage to U.S. citizens’ property.

Having demonstrated its ability to quash the revolution, after the war ended in 1878 Spain appeared more willing to negotiate compromises with Cuba, including expansion of trade with the United States and reduction of taxes and tariffs. The subsequent increase of financial ties with the United States would have lasting consequences. In particular, as prices for sugar (Cuba’s main export) plummeted in the 1880s, Cubans turned to creditors in the United States for emergency assistance, pledging their land as collateral. When, as often happened, they were unable to repay, creditors took the land. The United States was already Cuba’s primary trading partner, so Cuba’s depression set the stage for full-fledged domination of all sectors of the economy. In addition to sugar, U.S. investors were active in railroads, cattle, coffee, manganese and nickel mining, boarding houses, general stores, banks, and steamships. Citizens of the United States, who had already been coming to the island, arrived in greater numbers to live and work. It had become clear that as a source of trade and investment, Spain could not keep up economically with the United States. Cubans wanted credit and export markets, and in both areas the dying Spanish empire lacked resources after the Ten Years’ War.

For a decade or more, the U.S.–Cuban–Spanish relationship was largely amicable, but tensions arose from two sources. The first was the continued Cuban fervor for independence, and “Cuba libre” (“free Cuba”) did not refer solely to Spain. The Creole idea of annexation had faded, and a conflict

over the precise nature of Cuban independence seemed inevitable. But as has always been the case, U.S. domestic politics strongly influenced U.S. foreign policy, and in 1894 domestic problems precipitated a crisis. Facing yet another economic depression, as well as a bitterly fought presidential election, the U.S. Congress passed a tariff that imposed a hefty tax on Cuban sugar, which had previously enjoyed almost completely free access to U.S. markets. Spain responded with tariffs of its own, but the damage was soon evident. Because Cuba relied almost entirely on the U.S. market, many Cubans faced bankruptcy, whether they were sugar growers, suppliers, or even just part of the chain of merchants who made their living from U.S.–Cuban commerce.

Given Spain's inability to assist its colony in any meaningful way, many Cubans joined rebel forces, a development that by the 1890s alarmed Cuban landowners and urban economic elites, who felt pressure from all directions. Staying with Spain was untenable and almost pointless, given its economic and military impotence, but becoming independent was an equally unpleasant idea. Independence would very likely mean a revolt from below, which would become a direct (and violent) challenge to the entire racial and social class structure. So these elites, who maintained their own representatives in large U.S. cities such as New York, appealed directly to the United States to step in and take Spain's place. However, they were still unable to generate U.S. support for such a decision because policy makers had little respect for them. President Grover Cleveland told his secretary of state that the Cuban insurgents were "the most inhuman and barbarous cutthroats in the world."¹²

The United States continued to insist that Spain must make more concessions and grant more autonomy, while it maintained order with military force. The hope was that such compromises would take the steam out of the revolutionary movement and restore the elite's faith in Spain's ability to rule. In 1897 and early 1898, Spain made sweeping changes, even a new constitution for the island. The effect became the opposite of what both Spain and the United States wanted. Most Spaniards in Cuba felt betrayed, because they believed that autonomy would quickly lead to complete control by Cubans. Economic elites in general believed that Spain was essentially giving up, and that notion was reinforced by the Spanish military's inability to curb the growing insurrectionary forces sweeping from the mountains of eastern Cuba toward the west. For the rebels, Spain's concessions made the mother country look even weaker and bolstered their calls for independence.

Into 1898, President William McKinley began to realize that unless the United States took action, Spain would lose Cuba. Because policy makers believed Cubans to be incapable of effective self-rule, that outcome was unacceptable. In that view, the many interests of U.S. citizens in Cuba would be in peril if a band of ragtag rebels managed to take power. McKinley tried to push both sides toward a ceasefire and negotiations. Ultimately, Spain agreed to a ceasefire, but the insurgents refused. Spain was losing the war, and McKinley felt that the time had come for intervention.

By the time McKinley sent troops, U.S. public attention was focused squarely—even obsessively—on the island. The president and Congress alike were swept up in the fever. Intermestic issues were also present. Republicans did not want to appear soft and, knowing that they would face the formidable William Jennings Bryan in the 1898 elections, decided that being more aggressive would play better in public opinion. From their morning newspapers, people in the United States had been reading for some time about Spanish atrocities (especially the forced movement of Cubans—called “reconcentration”—to deprive guerrillas of support) and so were primed to use military might. So-called yellow journalists, led by William Randolph Hearst’s *New York Journal*, wrote lurid stories that were accompanied by even more suggestive drawings and cartoons.

In this context, in February 1898 a U.S. battleship, the *Maine*, blew up in Havana harbor, killing 266. Did Spain deliberately attack the ship? An immediate naval investigation concluded that an underwater mine had caused the explosion, despite the fact that the water around the ship was so muddy that divers could see virtually nothing, and even though the theory of an internal explosion was credible, given similar catastrophes in the past several years. Most analyses since then have concluded the latter, but at the time the president told Congress and the public that it was an act of sabotage, thus inflaming public opinion.

In April 1898, McKinley formally requested that Congress authorize him to take whatever measures were necessary to oust the Spanish from Cuba. Congress did grant him that authority, though it included a restriction. The Teller Amendment, authored by a Colorado senator who wanted to make sure that Cuba’s sugar would not compete with his state’s crop of beet sugar, prohibited the president from annexing Cuba:

[T]he United States hereby disclaims any disposition or intention to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction, or control over said island, except for the pacification thereof, and asserts its determination, when that is accomplished, to leave the government and control of the island to its people.¹³

Cuba would therefore not become part of the United States, but the president could still occupy the island for pacification. Because no one defined “pacification,” the amendment gave McKinley and his successors the legal justification to occupy Cuba indefinitely.

Soon thereafter, the United States invaded. The war itself would last only from April 21 to August 12. The War of Cuban Liberation suddenly became the Spanish–American War, financed and controlled by the United States. The irony is obvious: The name of a war for independence begun by Cubans in Cuba would not even mention Cuba. Although the war was ostensibly a joint U.S.–Cuban effort to expel Spain, Cubans were clearly held in very low regard. Theodore Roosevelt, who was assistant secretary of the Navy and



Figure 3.2 The 1898 Battle of Manila, at the end of the Spanish–American War, was a victory for the joint Philippine–American forces.

volunteered to fight (he recruited the so-called Rough Riders), later wrote, “We should have been better off if there had not been a single Cuban with the army. They accomplished literally nothing, while they were a source of trouble and embarrassment.”¹⁴ Secretary of State John Hay famously referred to the conflict as a “splendid little war,” and for him and many others, the less Cubans were involved, the more splendid it was.

As Spanish troops surrendered to the oncoming forces, the negotiations excluded Cubans, and control over territory was left entirely to U.S. soldiers. In some cases (such as the city of Santiago), Cuban troops were not even allowed to enter. By the summer, many Cuban soldiers, tired of being openly scorned and insulted, officially broke ties with the United States. As far as the war was concerned, this had little effect. The tide had turned, and by August Spain was ready to discuss the terms of its departure.

The end of Spanish rule in the Western Hemisphere was outlined in the Treaty of Paris. It transferred control over Cuba from Spain to the United States and did not even allude to or hint at Cuban independence. In practice, Cuba became a *de facto* U.S. colony until “pacification” was complete. As in all other matters important to Cuba, the treaty was written not only without

any Cubans present but also without consulting any Cuban leaders. The U.S. military began its occupation on New Year's Day of 1899.

The treaty also brought Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines into the U.S. fold (and Hawaii was annexed during the war), which greatly enlarged the U.S. presence in the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean. McKinley sent governors and troops to begin "civilizing" the new territories. The "Spanish-American" war thus encompassed much more than just Cuba.

From the perspective of the U.S. government, Cubans needed to be taught self-rule, which would require a long period of occupation. As historian Hugh Thomas writes, "In the light of this expectation, and of their own prejudices, these officers sought with dedication and without sparing themselves, to recast Cuban society, such as it was, in the mould of North America; all the corruption, the incompetence and makeshift devices lying between law and custom were to be swept immediately away; and from this well-meant effort much ill was later to flow."¹⁵ Most Cubans, who had been fighting Spain for decades, bristled at the idea of an extended U.S. presence intended to "improve" them. Although some, especially those who owned property, welcomed the U.S. presence to protect them from the dangers of disorder, elections would demonstrate that a majority of elites wanted to be fully independent. Hoping to exclude the "rabble" from elections, the United States restricted suffrage to approximately 5 percent of the population, but independence-minded candidates nonetheless won municipal elections in 1900 and also seats on the constitutional assembly.

However, the McKinley administration was in a bind. The Teller Amendment prohibited outright annexation, the occupation had no legal justification, and there were calls from Congress to pull out. Meanwhile, the Cuban constitutional assembly refused to accept any limits on Cuban sovereignty in its new constitution. The administration did have political allies, such as Senator Orville H. Platt of Connecticut, chair of the Senate Committee on Relations with Cuba. The senator was elected five times, but is remembered primarily for his contribution to the Cuba debate rather than for any other legislation. In 1901, Congress would enact the Platt Amendment.

According to its dictates, Cuba would become a protectorate of the United States. Military occupation would end, but Cuban leaders would be forced to ask for U.S. permission before entering into treaties with other countries, could not take on public debt beyond limits set by the United States, and had to lease certain areas of the island (such as Guantánamo Bay, which has notoriously remained under U.S. control ever since) to the U.S. government. Most important, the United States reserved the right to send its own military to the island at any time "for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty, and for discharging the obligations with respect to Cuba imposed by the treaty of Paris on the United States, now to be assumed and undertaken by the government of Cuba." These were the blessings of liberty.

Box 3.1 Platt Amendment (1901)

[I]n fulfillment of the declaration contained in the joint resolution approved April twentieth, eighteen hundred and ninety-eight, entitled “For the recognition of the independence of the people of Cuba, demanding that the Government of Spain relinquish its authority and government in the island of Cuba, and withdraw its land and naval forces from Cuba and Cuban waters, and directing the President of the United States to use the land and naval forces of the United States to carry these resolutions into effect,” the President is hereby authorized to “leave the government and control of the island of Cuba to its people” so soon as a government shall have been established in said island under a constitution which, either as a part thereof or in an ordinance appended thereto, shall define the future relations of the United States with Cuba, substantially as follows:

“I. That the government of Cuba shall never enter into any treaty or other compact with any foreign power or powers which will impair or tend to impair the independence of Cuba, nor in any manner authorize or permit any foreign power or powers to obtain by colonization or for military or naval purposes or otherwise, lodgement in or control over any portion of said island.”

“II. That said government shall not assume or contract any public debt, to pay the interest upon which, and to make reasonable sinking fund provision for the ultimate discharge of which, the ordinary revenues of the island, after defraying the current expenses of government shall be inadequate.”

“III. That the government of Cuba consents that the United States may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty, and for discharging the obligations with respect to Cuba imposed by the treaty of Paris on the United States, now to be assumed and undertaken by the government of Cuba.”

“IV. That all Acts of the United States in Cuba during its military occupancy thereof are ratified and validated, and all lawful rights acquired thereunder shall be maintained and protected.”

“V. That the government of Cuba will execute, and as far as necessary extend, the plans already devised or other plans to be mutually agreed upon, for the sanitation of the cities of the island, to the end that a recurrence of epidemic and infectious diseases may be prevented, thereby assuring protection to the people and commerce of Cuba, as

well as to the commerce of the southern ports of the United States and the people residing therein.”

“VI. That the Isle of Pines shall be omitted from the proposed constitutional boundaries of Cuba, the title thereto being left to future adjustment by treaty.”

“VII. That to enable the United States to maintain the independence of Cuba, and to protect the people thereof, as well as for its own defense, the government of Cuba will sell or lease to the United States lands necessary for coaling or naval stations at certain specified points to be agreed upon with the President of the United States.”

“VIII. That by way of further assurance the government of Cuba will embody the foregoing provisions in a permanent treaty with the United States.”

Source: <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=55&page=transcript>

Platt’s document was presented to the Cuban assembly writing the new constitution to inform its members that they could either include it as part of their constitution or suffer indefinite occupation. After acrimonious debate, the assembly finally agreed by a single-vote majority. As Secretary of State Elihu Root said without a trace of irony, “If they continue to exhibit ingratitude and entire lack of appreciation of the expenditure of blood and treasure of the United States to secure their freedom, the public sentiment of this country will be more unfavorable to them.”¹⁶ For the next thirty years, Cuban political affairs would be directed in large part from Washington, D.C.

The Importance of South America

Only occasionally did U.S. presidents regard anything south of Panama as an important strategic or economic interest. Two examples demonstrate the low but slowly growing salience of South America. With regard to Chile, the United States wielded its newfound political might, and in Venezuela it was asserting—and even extending—the dictates of the Monroe doctrine. In both cases, it was reacting primarily to European influence.

The War of the Pacific

In 1879, Chile went to war with Bolivia and Peru in the War of the Pacific. At stake was a small piece of coast in western Bolivia that Chile invaded. Peru was involved because it had previously signed an alliance with Bolivia that became operational if

either country were attacked. Although this desolate patch of land contained silver and copper mines, its main economic attraction was nitrates and guano, or bird droppings (indeed, in the treaty that ended the war, 9 of 14 articles referred to nitrates or guano).¹⁷ Built up over the centuries, these mounds of bird droppings were a rich source of fertilizer for Europe, where demand was growing at a tremendous rate. The “guano war” was a fight to determine who would control the industry, and for Bolivia, it also meant protecting its only access to the ocean.

The conflict itself was not automatically a high priority for the United States. More troubling was the high-profile presence of the British, who were actively working with the Chilean navy, as well as Germans and French. Chile was distant, but for U.S. policy makers the war could turn into an excuse for an expanded European presence. Suspensions ran high. By 1881, the United States actively tried to make its presence felt and serve as arbiter between the two sides. Ultimately, this effort was rebuffed (with U.S. envoys alienating both sides), and the matter was settled through a Chilean military victory in 1883, which meant the temporary occupation of Lima, as well as Bolivia’s loss of access to the Pacific Ocean.

The U.S. response to Chile’s 1891 civil war also heightened tensions. Ostensibly to protect its citizens, U.S. ships were sent to wait off the coast. One of these was the USS *Baltimore*. Meanwhile, by its words and actions the United States had shown a clear preference for the government in the civil war—for example, it had blocked the arrival of a ship containing arms for the insurgents—which became a serious problem when that government was defeated. The new Chilean leaders were convinced, with good reason, that they had no reason to trust U.S. diplomats or sailors. As one U.S. diplomat wrote, the “feeling of animosity against Americans is very decided ... in social gatherings and in groups of Chileans on street corners, when I have passed, I have heard chants of ‘abajo los Yankees (down with the Yankees).’”¹⁸

Within that atmosphere, in late 1891, sailors from the *Baltimore* went ashore to Valparaíso, Chile’s main port. Like other port cities in the world, it provided ample opportunity for sailors to lose their money in bars and bordellos, and the United States and Chile would come to the brink of war because of a drunken brawl. Insults led to fighting, which then erupted into mob violence, with U.S. sailors being chased and beaten (in two cases fatally). The administration of Benjamin Harrison demanded an apology and reparations, while the Chilean justice system slowly reviewed the incident and then laid the blame on U.S. sailors for inciting the violence. In 1892, the courts even sought to indict them.

Diplomatic efforts stalled, and Harrison went to Congress and requested that it be ready to take action: “We must protect those who, in foreign ports, display the flag or wear the colors of this Government against insult, brutality, and death, inflicted in resentment of the acts of their Government, and not for any fault of their own.”¹⁹ The Chilean minister suggested that President Harrison was either wrong or lying when he claimed (based on a U.S. Navy report) that Chileans were to blame.

As quickly as it had escalated, the furor died down. The Chilean government, which had just emerged from civil war, realized that it was almost at war with a much stronger country. The Chilean navy was well equipped in Latin American terms, but the government's resources were hardly adequate to sustain a war either financially or politically with a much more powerful opponent. Chile had also received news from England, where an official of the Foreign Office claimed that if the United States did not receive what it demanded, then President Harrison planned to declare war and seize nitrate territories as repayment.²⁰ The Chilean government offered to pay reparations and distanced itself from the statements of its minister. Nonetheless, as a British diplomat noted, the affair had created a "passionate sense of hatred toward the United States, which will take a long time to remove."²¹ The event faded, but overall suspicion of the United States within Latin America was increasing.

Venezuela and the Olney Doctrine

Another important conflict in South America was geographically much closer to the United States. For years there had been a border dispute between Venezuela and British Guiana. Neither the Dutch (who had originally claimed Guiana and then ceded it to Britain) nor Spain had ever explicitly mapped out the borderline. Only in the mid-nineteenth century did Britain finally do so, to Venezuela's determined dissatisfaction. In the 1870s, Venezuela pushed the issue and demanded negotiations to settle the matter. In that effort, Venezuelans turned to the United States for support. Although the Monroe Doctrine was only sporadically affirmed, Venezuelan leaders lobbied to invoke it. Predictably, for a number of years U.S. administrations either did not respond or did so vaguely. This northern tip of South America was not strategically important (though the head of the Orinoco River was becoming significant for trade) and so U.S. policy makers did not deem it worth the political effort to become involved in the conflict.

The discovery of gold increased Venezuelan interest in the territory, and matters finally came to a head in 1887, when Venezuela demanded that Great Britain vacate part of the disputed territory. Yet again Venezuela appealed to the United States, citing Britain's "insatiable thirst for conquest" as a rationale for invoking the Monroe Doctrine.²² Once settled into his second term of office in 1893, President Grover Cleveland finally made the issue a foreign policy priority. Perhaps the British were indeed becoming too aggressive in the region, as their influence in Central America remained significant.

In 1894, Cleveland mentioned British encroachment in his State of the Union address, and the U.S. Congress passed a joint resolution encouraging U.S. participation in arbitration. In 1895, Cleveland instructed Secretary of State Richard Olney to craft a message that would be delivered to the British. It had two parts: the first asserted U.S. interests in the hemisphere, and the second proposed U.S. involvement in arbitration. It would become known as the Olney Doctrine.

The foundation of Olney's message was, of course, a reiteration of Monroe's words. What made it different was the bolder proclamation that the United States was "practically sovereign on this continent, and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition." Deconstructing Olney's nineteenth-century language shows a simple and forceful message: The United States was the hegemonic power in the region and felt perfectly justified in using its might to protect its interests, which went well beyond Monroe's original intent.

Box 3.2 Olney Doctrine (1895)

Since the close of the negotiations initiated in 1893, Venezuela has repeatedly brought the controversy to the notice of the United States, has insisted upon its importance to the United States as well as to Venezuela, has represented it to have reached an acute stage—making definite action by the United States imperative—and has not ceased to solicit the services and support of the United States in aid of its final adjustment. ... [T]he Government of the United States has made it clear to Great Britain and to the world that the controversy is one in which both its honor and its interests are involved and the continuance of which it cannot regard with indifference.

That there are circumstances under which a nation may justly interpose in a controversy to which two or more nations are the direct and immediate parties is an admitted canon of international law. The doctrine is ordinarily expressed in terms of the most general character and is perhaps incapable of more specific statement. ... President Monroe, in the celebrated Message of December 2, 1823 ... declared that the American continents were fully occupied and were not the subjects of future colonization by European powers. ... It was realized that it was futile to lay down such a rule unless its observance could be enforced. It was manifest that the United States was the only power in this hemisphere capable of enforcing it. It was therefore courageously declared not merely that Europe ought not to interfere in American affairs, but that any European power doing so would be regarding as antagonizing the interests and inviting the Opposition of the United States.

That America is in no part open to colonization, though the proposition was not universally admitted at the time of its first enunciation, has long been universally conceded. We are now concerned, therefore, only with that other practical application of the Monroe doctrine the disregard of which by an European power is to be deemed an act of unfriendliness towards the United States. The precise scope and

limitations of this rule cannot be too clearly apprehended. It does not establish any general protectorate by the United States over other American states. ... It does not contemplate any interference in the internal affairs of any American state or in the relations between it and other American states. It does not justify any attempt on our part to change the established form of government of any American state or to prevent the people of such state from altering that form according to their own will and pleasure. The rule in question has but a single purpose and object. It is that no European power or combination of European powers shall forcibly deprive an American state of the right and power of self-government and of shaping for itself its own political fortunes and destiny.

If ... for the reasons stated the forcible intrusion of European powers into American politics is to be deprecated—if, as it is to be deprecated, it should be resisted and prevented—such resistance and prevention must come from the United States. They would come from it, of course, were it made at the point of attack. But, if they come at all, they must also come from it when any other American state is attacked, since only the United States has the strength adequate to the exigency.

Is it true, then, that the safety and welfare of the United States are so concerned with the maintenance of the independence of every American state as against any European power as to justify and require the interposition of the United States whenever that independence is endangered? The question can be candidly answered in but one way. The states of America, South as well as North, by geographical proximity, by natural sympathy, by similarity of governmental constitutions, are friends and allies, commercially and politically, of the United States. To allow the subjugation of any of them by a European power is, of course, to completely reverse that situation and signifies the loss of all the advantages incident to their natural relations with us. But that is not all. The people of the United States have a vital interest in the cause of popular self-government. They have secured the right for themselves and their posterity at the cost of infinite blood and treasure. They have realized and exemplified its beneficent operation by a career unexampled in point of national greatness or individual felicity. They believe it to be for the healing of all nations, and that civilization must either advance or retrograde accordingly as its supremacy is extended or curtailed. Imbued with these sentiments, the people of the United States might not impossibly be wrought up to an active propaganda in favor of a cause so highly valued both for themselves and for mankind. But the age of the Crusades has passed, and they are content with such assertion and defense of the right of popular government as their own

security and welfare demand. It is in that view more than in any other that they believe it not to be tolerated that the political control of an American state shall be forcibly assumed by a European power.

... Today the United States is practically sovereign on this continent, and its feat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition. Why? It is not because of the pure friendship or good will felt for it. It is not simply by reason of its high character as a civilized state, nor because wisdom and justice and equity are the invariable characteristics of the dealings of the United States. It is because, in addition to all other grounds, its infinite resources combined with its isolated position render it master of the situation and practically invulnerable as against any or all other powers.

All the advantages of this superiority are at once imperiled if the principle be admitted that European powers may convert American states into colonies or provinces of their own. ...

There is, then, a doctrine of American public law, well founded in principle and abundantly sanctioned by precedent, which entitles and requires the United States to treat as an injury to itself the forcible assumption by a European power of political control over an American state. The application of the doctrine to the boundary dispute between Great Britain and Venezuela remains to be made and presents no real difficulty. Though the dispute relates to a boundary line, yet, as it is between states, it necessarily imports political control to be lost by one party and gained by the other. The political control at stake, too, is of no mean importance, but concerns a domain of great extent ... and, if it also directly involves the command of the mouth of the Orinoco, is of immense consequence in connection with the whole river navigation of the interior of South America. ...

... It being clear, therefore, that the United States may legitimately insist upon the merits of the boundary question being determined, it is equally clear that there is but one feasible mode of determining them, viz., peaceful arbitration. ...

In these circumstances, the duty of the President appears to him unmistakable and imperative. Great Britain's assertion of title to the disputed territory combined with her refusal to have that title investigated being a substantial appropriation of the territory to her own use, not to protest and give warning that the transaction will be regarded as injurious to the interests of the people of the United States as well as oppressive in itself would be to ignore an established policy with which the honor and welfare of this country are closely identified. ...

Source: U.S. Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS), 1895: 545–62.

The British rejected the idea that the United States had any right to be involved at all. In other words, even the Monroe Doctrine was invalid. That is how the matter stood for most of 1895, while both sides tried to resolve the problem. Cleveland asked Congress to set up a commission to investigate the boundaries in question, and in early 1896, Great Britain backed down and accepted negotiation. The commission itself included no Venezuelans (who were, in fact, never consulted at all), and the agreement concluded in 1899 gave the British government most of what it wanted; namely, a continuation of the status quo. Given that the entire unpleasant business was nearing its end, Cleveland had no desire to antagonize Britain with an unfavorable settlement.

Although Britain did not explicitly acknowledge U.S. hegemony, its acquiescence to demands meant the same in practice. Not long after the Venezuela conflict, Britain would accept the demise of the Clayton–Bulwer Treaty as well. Recognition was dawning that the United States was a formidable power—a feeling that would solidify after the Spanish–American War—and that rapprochement was preferable to enmity. If the United States wanted to establish dominion over its “neighborhood,” so be it.

Conflicting Visions of Pan-Americanism

Ever since independence was won from Spain, many Latin American leaders—most notably Simón Bolívar—had advocated regional unity. Unity did not necessarily mean union, which only a few desired, but hemispheric agreements that would bolster economic growth and security for all. The concept of Pan-Americanism in general refers to the notion that there is a commonality among the republics of the Americas that should bind them together. As a result, those nations should engage with each other more actively in all different spheres, from trade to diplomacy to the creation of international institutions. The problem, of course, lay in articulating how that should happen, who should lead (not to mention pay for) the effort and who would benefit the most from the interaction. The “modernist” literary movement in Latin America around the turn of the century marked a new self-reflection of Spanish American culture. The Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío called for “Pan Hispanism,” which deliberately excluded the United States. In his poem “Salute of the Optimist” (“Salutación del optimista”), Darío calls for the “fertile Hispanic blood” to awaken and to “sing new hymns” of glory.²³

One strand of Pan-Americanism consciously excluded the United States, which from a realist perspective reflects power balancing. Taken together as a group, Latin American countries could counter U.S. hegemony and assert itself more forcefully. The basic idea is that there is more strength in numbers. Indeed, the United States resisted such congregation precisely for that reason. On the flip side, Latin American countries were cautious about U.S.

government initiatives, fearing ulterior motives. When Secretary of State James Blaine suggested a conference in 1881, it fell apart because the Chilean government did not trust him.

Meetings convened periodically in Latin American cities, with widely varying participation and results, something that has not changed much in the twenty-first century. For example, the United States refused to attend a conference on creating hemispheric law, on the grounds that U.S. and Latin American legal systems were too different. In general, the United States (with the exception of Blaine) showed no interest and preferred to deal directly with individual governments; and even within Latin America, the delegates found it difficult to reach consensus on most issues.

Yet there was *some* effort. Under Secretary Blaine's direction, in 1889 the United States hosted an inter-American conference in Washington, D.C., the First American International Conference, more commonly known as the first Pan-American Conference. The impetus was the U.S. economic crisis and need to cultivate foreign markets, and the conference came on the heels of a special government commission that had issued a report detailing the tremendous economic possibilities in Latin America. All countries could send as many delegates as they wished. The Latin American countries sent between one and three each, the majority of whom were diplomats, and the United States sent ten, all of them businessmen and most of whom spoke no Spanish.

The two essential goals for Blaine (who, though he had resigned in the meantime, attended as a nondelegate) were a customs union and an arbitration system for international disputes. The delegates were hopelessly split, and Argentina led the opposition to both ideas. A customs union would limit a country's control over its tax income, and many feared that a fixed system of arbitration would end up favoring the stronger countries, especially the United States. Along with Brazil, Argentina offered a proposal that would formally oppose territorial conquest, and the U.S. delegates refused to accept it. Nationalism, combined with skepticism of U.S. motives, stalled all major proposals. Yet the fact that all countries of the "Americas" (with the sole exception of the Dominican Republic, which did not attend) came together was, in itself, an accomplishment that eventually led to a series of organizations (the Commercial Bureau of the American Republics in 1889 became the International Bureau of the American Republics in 1902, and in turn the 1910 Pan-American Union) that would become today's Organization of American States in 1948.

Suspicious of a U.S. drive to hegemony permeated this and many future conferences. As the famous Cuban nationalist leader José Martí reported from the meetings, the United States was "glutted with unsaleable merchandise and determined to extend its dominions in America."²⁴ Latin American representatives reiterated the same sentiment, even openly, but for the most part continued to attend. They did not necessarily trust their giant northern neighbor, but its presence was impossible to ignore.

Summary and Conclusion

At the dawn of the twentieth century, the United States was a country with tremendous military and economic power, which was reflected in its relationship with Latin America. In terms of realist theory, it established a unipolar relationship. That region still suffered both economic dependence and political instability. As a result, it was widely agreed in the United States that, as one scholar of the time put it, “Economic imperialism is very wholesome when carried out with discretion ... [and] will also often be of great assistance to the backward countries that cannot follow the progress of the nations.”²⁵ This was, as Samuel Bemis put it, “protective imperialism.”²⁶ The consensus was that the United States was helping countries that otherwise would remain mired in near barbarism, and so the mantle of “protection” not only was wholly justified but also should be applauded. It is undeniable that U.S. efforts did bring some measure of advancement in Latin America—especially in combating disease—but reaction in the region to U.S. policy also demonstrates that its presence and actions were not universally admired.

Despite some initial efforts at developing Pan-Americanism, as yet there were no major international institutions, and nothing that could effectively check U.S. influence. The fact that the United States was expanding its economic presence as it industrialized meant it was in an even more favorable position to use its leverage.

The effects of the increasing military and economic dominance of the United States would soon be manifest. European countries were largely ceding control in the region, and there were no remaining obstacles to U.S. actions. The era of dollar diplomacy would merge seamlessly with military intervention and occupation. Chapter 4 addresses the expansion of U.S. military action and the resentment that it fostered.

Research Questions

1. How did the United Fruit Company manage to become so powerful in parts of Latin America? In what countries was it most influential, and why?
2. What was the relative weight of domestic and international factors in the decision by the United States to declare war on Spain and initiate the Spanish–American War?
3. When responding to conflicts in the latter half of the nineteenth century, were U.S. actions based primarily on economic or political factors? Was there a regional difference, for example, between Central America and South America?
4. Analyze the attempts made in the nineteenth century to establish Pan-American union or inter-American agreements. Who favored such proposals? What were the primary obstacles?

5. Discuss how well realist theory serves to explain U.S. policy toward Latin America after the Civil War. Does dependency theory offer a compelling alternative?

Notes

- 1 Quoted in LaFeber 1963, 20–21.
- 2 Langley and Schoonover 1995, 22.
- 3 Quoted in Schoonover 1991, 56.
- 4 Quoted in Schoultz 1998, 94.
- 5 Quoted in Leonard 1991, 39.
- 6 Healy 2001, 49.
- 7 Quoted in Holden and Zolov 2000, 84.
- 8 Quoted in Schoultz 1998, 164.
- 9 Quoted in Conniff 2001, 74.
- 10 Henry 1904, 132.
- 11 Quoted in Bermann 1986, 137.
- 12 Quoted in Schoultz 1998, 128.
- 13 Quoted in Holden and Zolov 2000, 73.
- 14 Quoted in Pérez 1983, 201.
- 15 Thomas 1998, 436.
- 16 Quoted in Pérez 1983, 325.
- 17 Loveman 2001, 172.
- 18 Quoted in Sater 1990, 60.
- 19 Quoted in Sater 1990, 64.
- 20 Pike 1963, 78.
- 21 Quoted in Sater 1990, 67.
- 22 Quoted in Schoultz 1998, 110.
- 23 Quoted in Aching 1997, 160.
- 24 Quoted in Smith 2000, 19.
- 25 Gil 1911, 170.
- 26 Bemis 1943, 140.

Further Sources

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Websites

United Fruit Historical Society, Inc. A website created by two Ph.D. history students at Stanford University. It provides a good overview of the company, biographies of important figures, a company chronology, and also a large bibliography for further study. <http://www.unitedfruit.org/>

The World of 1898: The Spanish–American War. This website, based at the Hispanic Division of the U.S. Library of Congress, provides a chronology and index of people, places, and events. It has presentations on Cuba, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Spain. <http://www.loc.gov/tr/hispanic/1898/>

Another useful website is **Crucible of Empire: The Spanish–American War**, produced by the Public Broadcasting System. In particular, it includes a bibliography, links to other sites, and a short discussion (with examples of political cartoons and headlines) of “yellow journalism.” <http://www.pbs.org/crucible/>

The Panama Canal is the official site of the canal. It contains a large amount of information, both historical and current, including the canal’s legal and historical foundations, its administration, photos (including a live camera), news, and press releases. <http://www.acp.gob.pa/eng/>

The Era of Intervention and the Good Neighbor

Timeline

1902	Debt crisis in Venezuela; Drago Doctrine
1904	“Roosevelt corollary” to the Monroe Doctrine
1905	Dominican Republic goes into receivership
1910–1917	Mexican revolution
1912	U.S. Marines arrive in Nicaragua
1916–1917	“Punitive Expedition” in Mexico
1925–1933	Machado dictatorship in Cuba
1929	Stock market crash and beginning of global depression
1933	Franklin Roosevelt announces Good Neighbor Policy
1934	Platt Amendment abrogated

After the turn of the twentieth century, the United States was an acknowledged global power in both economic and military terms. The country had industrialized and begun to pursue foreign markets with more vigor. Foreign policy had also been transformed; it was more aggressive and more often backed by military might. Most U.S. political leaders viewed the country’s role as that of bringing the light of civilization to the rest of the world. That coincided perfectly with national security and economic growth, because U.S. actions in the less developed world would also bring the forced stability that U.S. investors desired. That is in line with both realism and dependency theory. All of this was readily apparent in Latin America, where U.S. power would be wielded on behalf of U.S. interests. The first third of the twentieth century hews closely to the expectations of realist theory, as U.S. leaders were well

aware of the power imbalance and used it openly to advance national interests, both political and economic. But of course that power was also used to keep Latin American commodities under U.S. control to the extent possible. This chapter examines the extension of U.S. power in this period, which ends with a significant shift in U.S. policy, marked by the Good Neighbor Policy.

In Central America and the Caribbean, most countries were still reeling from the conflicts between liberals and conservatives that had brought on sometimes rapid and usually violent changes of government. Eager for foreign capital, presidents and dictators accepted and even invited U.S. investment for their own benefit. In South America, where U.S. attention was less avid, countries like Argentina and Chile were outpacing their neighbors economically, but remained too weak to challenge U.S. hegemony. It would be an age of imperialism, as no country in the hemisphere was able to stop the northern juggernaut.

The intense and rapid chain of events that brought Cuba and other territories into the U.S. orbit and established even more firmly the imprint of U.S. economic influence was capped in December 1904 by the “Roosevelt corollary” to the Monroe Doctrine (see Box 4.1). Just as Monroe before him had done, President Theodore Roosevelt used the occasion of his State of the Union address to outline publicly the U.S. response to Latin American political affairs and the European presence there. Although the Olney Doctrine had already expanded the original idea of keeping the region free of European encroachment, Roosevelt took it to an entirely new level when he announced that in certain situations the United States would act as an “international police power.” The notion that a stronger country could and should assert its hegemonic position was taken for granted. Indeed, the self-interest of the United States was portrayed as positive for all concerned. This was not just a cynical front—policy makers may have seemed obnoxious at times, but they believed it.

The rationale for such a statement was the pressing dilemma of Latin American governments finding themselves unable to pay debts to foreign creditors. In 1902, Great Britain, Germany, and Italy combined to attack Venezuela when its president showed himself unwilling to pay. Under bombardment, he agreed to bring the case to arbitration, but the presence of European warships in the hemisphere was something Roosevelt committed himself to avoiding. Roosevelt successfully pushed the European powers to accept arbitration in the Venezuelan case, but sought a new framework to deal with similar situations in the future. The solution, he told Congress, was for the United States to control a country’s finances if they “had invited foreign aggression” through fiscal mismanagement. This intervention was a selfless act, he argued, and a sacrifice, but it was necessary. In other words, U.S. security was at stake if Latin American countries could not fulfill their obligations, which, in his opinion, provided more than enough justification for intervention.

Box 4.1 The Roosevelt Corollary (1904)

It is not true that the United States feels any land hunger or entertains any projects as regards the other nations of the Western Hemisphere save such as are for their welfare. All that this country desires is to see the neighboring countries stable, orderly, and prosperous. Any country whose people conduct themselves well can count upon our hearty friendship. If a nation shows that it knows how to act with reasonable efficiency and decency in social and political matters, if it keeps order and pays its obligations, it need fear no interference from the United States. Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power. If every country washed by the Caribbean Sea would show the progress in stable and just civilization which with the aid of the Platt Amendment Cuba has shown since our troops left the island, and which so many of the republics in both Americas are constantly and brilliantly showing, all question of interference by this Nation with their affairs would be at an end. Our interests and those of our southern neighbors are in reality identical. They have great natural riches, and if within their borders the reign of law and justice obtains, prosperity is sure to come to them. While they thus obey the primary laws of civilized society they may rest assured that they will be treated by us in a spirit of cordial and helpful sympathy. We would interfere with them only in the last resort, and then only if it became evident that their inability or unwillingness to do justice at home and abroad had violated the rights of the United States or had invited foreign aggression to the detriment of the entire body of American nations. It is a mere truism to say that every nation, whether in America or anywhere else, which desires to maintain its freedom, its independence, must ultimately realize that the right of such independence can not be separated from the responsibility of making good use of it.

In asserting the Monroe Doctrine, in taking such steps as we have taken in regard to Cuba, Venezuela, and Panama, and in endeavoring to circumscribe the theater of war in the Far East, and to secure the open door in China, we have acted in our own interest as well as in the interest of humanity at large. There are, however, cases in which, while our own interests are not greatly involved, strong appeal is made to our sympathies.

Ordinarily it is very much wiser and more useful for us to concern ourselves with striving for our own moral and material betterment here at home than to concern ourselves with trying to better the condition of things in other nations. We have plenty of sins of our own to war against, and under ordinary circumstances we can do more for the general uplifting of humanity by striving with heart and soul to put a stop to civic corruption, to brutal lawlessness and violent race prejudices here at home than by passing resolutions and wrongdoing elsewhere. Nevertheless there are occasional crimes committed on so vast a scale and of such peculiar horror as to make us doubt whether it is not our manifest duty to endeavor at least to show our disapproval of the deed and our sympathy with those who have suffered by it. The cases must be extreme in which such a course is justifiable. There must be no effort made to remove the mote from our brother's eye if we refuse to remove the beam from our own. But in extreme cases action may be justifiable and proper. What form the action shall take must depend upon the circumstances of the case; that is, upon the degree of the atrocity and upon our power to remedy it. The cases in which we could interfere by force of arms as we interfered to put a stop to intolerable conditions in Cuba are necessarily very few. Yet it is not to be expected that a people like ours, which in spite of certain very obvious shortcomings, nevertheless as a whole shows by its consistent practice its belief in the principles of civil and religious liberty and of orderly freedom, a people among whom even the worst crime, like the crime of lynching, is never more than sporadic, so that individuals and not classes are molested in their fundamental rights

Source: <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=56>

The Drago Doctrine

The Latin American response to the 1902 Venezuelan crisis was different, and decidedly counterhegemonic. Luis Drago, the Argentine minister to the United States, wrote a document (later referred to as the Drago Doctrine) asserting that no government had the right to collect public debt by force. Argentina had European debt, which made Drago nervous. Appealing to the Monroe Doctrine's emphasis on resistance to the expansion of external influence, Drago envisioned a multilateral inter-American response to debt, very likely with Argentina at the forefront. Although applauded by many, it was largely ignored in the United States, which was not interested in sharing leadership with other nations or in committing itself to multilateral action. The Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío, who in 1904 wrote the poem "To

Roosevelt,” sums up the Latin American reaction lyrically: “You’re rich / You combine the worship of Hercules with the worship of Mammon; / and lighting the way for easy conquest.”¹

European governments ignored the Drago Doctrine, and The Hague’s Court of Permanent Arbitration ruled that creditor countries had the right to use force to collect debts. As always, for the United States the essential reasons for intervention were rooted not in any sense of hemispheric solidarity or international law, but rather in a calculation of what foothold potentially hostile European countries may have been gaining. In this sense, Roosevelt accomplished his foreign policy goal because no European power would ever again attempt to collect debts with military force. But he did at least mention the doctrine in his 1906 State of the Union speech.

Box 4.2 The Drago Doctrine (1902)

[T]his government has deemed it expedient to transmit to your excellency some considerations with reference to the forcible collection of the public debt suggested by the events that have taken place.

Among the fundamental principles of public international law which humanity has consecrated, one of the most precious is that which decrees that all states, whatever be the force at their disposal, are entities in law, perfectly equal one to another, and mutually entitled by virtue thereof to the same consideration and respect.

The acknowledgment of the debt, the payment of it in its entirety, can and must be made by the nation without diminution of its inherent rights as a sovereign entity, but the summary and immediate collection at a given moment, by means of force, would occasion nothing less than the ruin of the weakest nations, and the absorption of their governments, together with all the functions inherent in them, by the mighty of the earth. ...

This is in no wise a defense for bad faith, disorder, and deliberate and voluntary insolvency. It is intended merely to preserve the dignity of the public international entity which may not thus be dragged into war. ...

As these are the sentiments of justice, loyalty, and honor which animate the Argentine people and have always inspired its policy, your excellency will understand that it has felt alarmed at the knowledge that the failure of Venezuela to meet the payments of its public debt is given as one of the determining causes of the capture of its fleet, the bombardment of one of its ports, and the establishment of a rigorous blockade along its shores. If such proceedings were to be definitely

adopted they would establish a precedent dangerous to the security and the peace of the nations of this part of America. ...

Such a situation seems obviously at variance with the principles many times proclaimed by the nations of America, and particularly with the Monroe Doctrine, sustained and defended with so much zeal on all occasions by the United States, a doctrine to which the Argentine Republic has heretofore solemnly adhered. ...

The only principle which the Argentine Republic maintains and which it would, with great satisfaction, see adopted, in view of the events in Venezuela, by a nation that enjoys such great authority and prestige as does the United States, is the principle, already accepted, that there can be no territorial expansion in America on the part of Europe, nor any oppression of the peoples of this continent, because an unfortunate financial situation may compel some one of them to the fulfillment of its promises. In a word, the principles which she would like to see recognized is: that the public debt can not occasion armed intervention nor even the actual occupation of the territory of American nations by a European power.

The loss of prestige and credit experienced by the States which fail to satisfy the rightful claims of their lawful creditors bring with it difficulties of such magnitude as to render it unnecessary for foreign intervention to aggravate with its oppression the temporary misfortunes of insolvency. ...

At this time, then, no selfish feeling animates us, nor do we seek our own advantage in manifesting our desire that public debt of States should not serve as a reason for an armed attack on such States. ...

I address you ... that you may communicate to the Government of the United States our point of view regarding the events in the further development of which that Government is to take so important a part. ...

Source: U.S. Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1903 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904): 1–5.

Understanding U.S.–Latin American relations in the first third of the twentieth century requires full cognizance of U.S. policy makers' perception that national security was at stake. Security, however, blended seamlessly with economic growth. Dollar diplomacy did not always reflect outright U.S. government support for private interests, but it generally did respond to the notion that expansion of the U.S. economy was essential for the nation's well-being and, by extension, its place in the international system. Dependency theorists would disagree and posit that this period marked an intensification

of the process of economic domination. As U.S. companies penetrated Latin America, they made it impossible for domestic capital to materialize. Instead, Latin American leaders were beholden to foreign investors, who ensured that their own interests would remain safe. The periodic intervention of the U.S. government solidified these relationships, and so autonomous economic development did not occur.

Debt and the Dominican Republic

During this period, only rarely did the United States believe that it might become a direct target of a European country, and Germany was the only country viewed seriously in that manner. The concept of security was therefore focused on how countries from outside the hemisphere were displacing U.S. political influence or perhaps were acting to block U.S. investors from gaining access to lucrative Latin American markets. That alone was sufficient to prompt U.S. presidents to take decisive measures.

The Dominican Republic was the first clear example of how the Roosevelt corollary was wielded in practice, but it also demonstrates the complexities of dollar diplomacy, because intervention came in response to the recognition that U.S. interests had helped bring a country to the brink of financial ruin. For decades, foreigners had controlled Dominican finances, and in 1892 a U.S. company bought the country's debt from a Dutch firm. With the aid of the Dominican dictator Ulises Heureaux, the company's president attempted to shift the economy toward the export of cash crops. This was dependency personified.

The strategy failed. In 1899, Heureaux was assassinated, and the U.S. company was completely discredited. The Dominican national debt had risen to \$32 million, and there was no sign that it could be paid off. There was also, of course, the specter of European intervention to collect debts. Specifically, the creditors were Belgian, French, German, Italian, and Spanish. President Roosevelt was not anxious to take on the debt of another country, but with the Venezuela imbroglio fresh in his mind, he finally decided (after he had been reelected in 1904) that such a decision was in the best interest of the United States. Negotiations yielded an agreement in 1905 that would "restore the credit, preserve the order, increase the efficiency of the civil administration and advance [the] material progress and welfare of the Republic."²² The decision was not popular in the U.S. Senate, and Roosevelt had to push it through by executive order until it was formally ratified in 1907.

Taking over the Dominican debt involved managing all of the customs houses, which at the time were the primary source of revenue for Latin American countries, especially in the absence of any effective domestic income tax. The United States collected the revenue and then made arrangements for repaying creditors. In other words, the situation was one of receivership, in

which an agent appointed by the United States had the legal right to control Dominican revenue and pay out whatever was necessary. Roosevelt also sent ships to Dominican waters to ensure that no European country would feel tempted to take its funds by force. As it turned out, however, European leaders assured Roosevelt that they accepted U.S. hegemony as long as their citizens were repaid.

Case Study in Dollar Diplomacy: Nicaragua

The downfall of Nicaraguan president José Santos Zelaya and the aftermath illustrate not only how the United States took power politics for granted, but also the blurring of public and private interests. After the Roosevelt administration decided to build the canal in Panama, U.S.–Nicaraguan relations deteriorated. Zelaya was actively involved in regional political intrigue, especially in countering the growing influence of Guatemala (though he also invaded Honduras in 1907), but wanted to play a leadership role in a more united Central America. Over time the Roosevelt and Taft administrations believed his actions to be destabilizing. Zelaya, who felt spurned when Nicaragua was not chosen as the canal site, made no attempt to curry favor either with the U.S. government or with U.S. investors in his country.

Within this context, in 1909 there was yet another uprising in Bluefields, the part of the coast where foreign influence had always been high. By that time, U.S. citizens outnumbered the British, so the majority of foreigners supported U.S. intervention. Zelaya's troops arrested two U.S. citizens who had played a role in the rebellion (by laying mines) and executed them for crimes against the government. If there had been any hesitance in Washington to overthrow Zelaya, it evaporated immediately. Soon Secretary of State Philander Knox argued that Zelaya's government was "a blot upon the history of Nicaragua," and that "it is equally a matter of common knowledge that under the regime of President Zelaya republican institutions have ceased in Nicaragua except in name, that public opinion and the press have been throttled, and that prison has been the reward of any tendency to real patriotism."³

Pressured by insistent calls from all quarters of the U.S. government to force him out, within a month, Zelaya resigned and fled the country. Trouble began immediately, as there was no choice of president who satisfied both the United States and a majority of Nicaraguan elites. So in 1912, the first U.S. Marines landed in Nicaragua to keep order and it became occupation. The soldiers were in the country almost constantly (with the exception of some periods between 1925 and 1927) until 1933 in support of conservative presidents. The national security of the United States was also taken into account through the 1914 Bryan–Chamorro Treaty. In that agreement, the United States paid Nicaragua \$3 million (which would go directly toward debt repayment) and in exchange received exclusive rights to build a canal if it

decided to do so and the right to lease Nicaraguan territory on the Caribbean and Gulf of Fonseca for ninety-nine years (with the option to renew for another ninety-nine years). Intervention in Nicaragua thus also served the purpose of shoring up the U.S. military presence in the region.

Occupation included seizing control over the country's finances, so U.S. representatives oversaw Nicaragua's customs revenue, national bank operations, railroads, and budget-making process. The Roosevelt corollary had made control of money an inevitable part of U.S. actions. Although undertaken by President Taft and his successors (not until Franklin Roosevelt's first term would the marines finally leave), the situation was the epitome of Theodore Roosevelt's corollary. From that perspective, if Nicaraguans were incapable of taking care of themselves, and if that state of affairs adversely affected the U.S. economy (whether because of trade disruption or because of harassment of investors and their interests) and national security, then it was only natural for the U.S. government to take action. For Taft, there was simply no doubt:

The United States has contributed much to the cause of peace by assisting countries weak in respect to their internal government so as to strengthen in them the cause of law and order. This relationship of guardian and ward as between nations and countries, in my judgment, helps along the cause of international peace and indicates progress in civilization.⁴

The combination of U.S. occupation and corrupt conservative governments sparked a rebellion in 1927. Augusto César Sandino was a widely traveled Nicaraguan who believed his country was suffering from national shame because of its evident lack of sovereignty. With the slogan "liberty or death," he rejected efforts at negotiated settlements and rallied his supporters to continue fighting. His attitude soon gained the attention of U.S. authorities, who proclaimed his activities illegal. Sandino became a national hero and dealt a black eye to the U.S. government, which had no interest in having the U.S. public read lurid headlines about casualties.

Within a year, Sandino was leading a guerrilla force that harassed and attacked U.S. occupation forces regularly. He was impossible to find because he seemed to melt into the countryside without a trace. As U.S. Marines trudged through rivers, mountains, and rainstorms, often beset by illness, the Nicaraguans they encountered viewed them primarily through a lens of nationalist suspicion and distrust.

In 1927, President Calvin Coolidge sent Henry Stimson (a former secretary of war) to Nicaragua on an official trip to assess the situation and meet with the Nicaraguan president. Stimson reported that free elections were essential because political differences tended to be decided through revolution. Next, Nicaragua required a trained constabulary force to ensure the country did not descend into chaos once U.S. forces were gone. The Agreement of

Tipitapa (named for the lake near where the meetings were held) stipulated that supervised elections would be held in 1928 and that all rebels would lay down their arms (Sandino refused to accept the agreement). Soon, U.S. marines began training a national guard military force to maintain order once the marines had departed (which occurred in 1933).

To head the national guard, Nicaraguan President Juan Sacasa (elected in 1932) chose Anastasio Somoza. Somoza was power hungry and ingratiating, so very adept at maintaining the support of the U.S. government despite the professed distaste many had for him. Soon after assuming his position, he managed to have Sandino arrested and murdered, which made Sandino a symbol for anti-Somoza, anti-U.S. rebels (the Sandinistas) decades later. In 1936, Somoza overthrew Sacasa, and for more than forty years, he and then his sons ruled Nicaragua.

President Roosevelt felt a certain distaste for Somoza but accepted him. In 1934, as Somoza maneuvered his way into power, the U.S. minister in Nicaragua advocated taking action to block him. Secretary of State Cordell Hull's response was:

It has for many years been said that the United States has sought to impose its own views upon the Central American states, and that to this end, it has not hesitated to interfere or intervene in their internal affairs. This criticism has been made particularly with regard to our relations with Nicaragua. We therefore desire not only to refrain in fact from any interference, but also from any measure which might seem to give the appearance of such interference.⁵

Somoza was therefore free to seize power and to construct a personalistic dictatorship, during which he amassed tremendous personal wealth and aggressively fought off any opposition. The U.S. policy of noninterference became a sort of tacit support, which bolstered Somoza's position. It was then that President Roosevelt is said to have made the famous, possibly apocryphal, remark about Somoza: "He is a son of a bitch, but he's our son of a bitch" (though some say the quote was aimed at Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo, who was similarly deserving of the label). When the Cold War began, the U.S. government supported him more openly and rewarded his virulent anti-Communist rhetoric.

These sorts of policies are consistent with realist theory, as they were based entirely on the perception of U.S. interests, with virtually no attention to the effect on the country in question. Nicaraguan politics would remain intimately tied to the United States until the 1990s, with rebellions of varying sizes against U.S.-supported governments. As a U.S. reporter noted in the late 1920s, "In 1909, the U.S. took a bear by the tail, and it has never been able to let it go. ... Once in, [the United States] found that it could not get out. It tried to get out, and disaster struck Nicaragua, and dragged it in again."⁶

The journalist Carleton Beals, who wrote a number of books on Latin America, noted in 1940 that “it is pure cocaine-dope to argue that democracy exists in the Western Hemisphere or even the larger part of it.”⁷ That kind of skepticism stemmed from the knowledge that propping up friendly leaders was not conducive to democracy, which was the essence of U.S. policy toward Central America and the Caribbean.

The Dominican Republic

Events in Nicaragua were mirrored in the Dominican Republic, where U.S. intervention would also have long-term political ramifications. In the Dominican Republic, decades of U.S. occupation and/or economic control were giving way to pressures within the United States to hand power back to Dominicans. The U.S. policy makers once again believed that a combination of elections (a free election was held in 1924) and a constabulary would provide the necessary conditions for an orderly withdrawal (though control over customs houses would not end until 1941).

The United States had earlier established a national guard, which had spent much of its time fighting guerrillas. Rafael Trujillo, who had joined the force in 1918, was chosen to head it when the marines left the country, and he was cut from the same cloth as Somoza. In 1930, he oversaw a fraudulent election, became president, and then ruled in a notoriously brutal and corrupt fashion with the full support of the United States until near the end, when he was finally viewed as too extreme, which led to his U.S.-aided assassination in 1961. The struggle for power after his death brought about a U.S. invasion in 1965, which is discussed in Chapter 5.

Controlling Cuba

A very similar state of affairs could be found in Cuba. With the Platt Amendment, the United States had already committed itself to intervention and, at times, occupation, and U.S. soldiers found themselves in Cuba from 1906 to 1909. But in Cuba, unlike Nicaragua, there was a large U.S. population and numerous U.S. companies, such as United Fruit and Hershey. As Louis Pérez argues, “Political culture, social formations, economic structures, and, in the end, the very function of the state were shaped by and around the expanding North American presence in Cuba.”⁸

This is an extreme version of dependency, as it is conscious and calculated. With coercion the United States was able to permeate every aspect of Cuban politics and the economy. This entailed driving out competitors and generally tethering the Cuban economy to U.S. consumers.

Dollar Diplomacy and Debt

In the early 1920s, large U.S. banks initiated a plan of extending loans to Latin American countries, one of the signs that U.S. policy makers were expanding their conceptions of security to include protection of economic interests. Economic power—that is, the ability of U.S. investors to use their money to extract sweetheart deals from Latin American governments—was often augmented by the might of the U.S. military, or at least with the overhanging threat of intervention.

These governments were short of capital—the 1920–1921 depression saw a sharp drop in export earnings—while the U.S. economy was picking up steam. Between 1922 and 1928, the banks lent \$2 billion. Given its size, Brazil took on the largest amount of debt, but in per capita terms the greatest debtors were Bolivia, Cuba, and Uruguay. All countries, however, took on more debt in the 1920s, as New York was overtaking London as the banking center for Latin American debt. At the same time, the United States periodically controlled customs revenue in Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Peru, Ecuador, Honduras, and Bolivia.

Debt and Central America

Debt was overcoming countries in Central America. By 1909, Honduran debt, dating all the way back to 1867, reached \$120 million, compared with annual revenues of approximately \$1.65 million. Although the U.S. government did not make Honduras into a permanent financial protectorate, it did step in to negotiate changes of government, and United Fruit also jockeyed to benefit from the government's financial woes. Guatemalan debt was approximately \$10.5 million, and the British government made insistent calls for accelerated repayment. The U.S. State Department disliked Guatemalan president Manuel Estrada Cabrera so much that it did not issue the normal anti-Europe response when the British government threatened the use of force. One American diplomat had gone home, in fact, after learning that the dictator was poisoning him.⁹ Estrada finally began paying in 1913. Even Costa Rica, traditionally the most stable Central American country, experienced firsthand a taste of dollar diplomacy. The U.S. government approved a \$13 million deal whereby private investors paid British creditors and reserved the right to appoint a customs collector if Costa Rica defaulted.

Thus, before the stock market crashed, dollar diplomacy had reached its zenith. Because debt could always be financed through new loans and because the U.S. government had shown itself so willing to guarantee stability, U.S. investors believed Latin American governments to be a source of unending profit. This is what is known as “moral hazard,” meaning investors can take extraordinary risks without fear of consequence. Moreover, U.S. officials

believed they were simply helping Latin American governments accomplish what they were otherwise incapable of achieving.

In Latin America, the loans were often accompanied by corruption and enrichment of political and economic elites, especially in those countries with dictatorships. Many of the loans were ostensibly for public works projects, and although projects such as sanitation, roads, hospitals, and schools were built, the relatively low expenditures showed that funds were disappearing into the pockets of both national and local elites. The fact that loans did not spur rapid economic growth made the issuance of new loans inevitable. Rumbblings from the poorer classes would accelerate in the 1930s; they had never benefited much from the apparent prosperity of the 1920s and were devastated by the subsequent depression.

The expansion of U.S. economic interests expanded beyond Central America and the Caribbean. By the time of the Good Neighbor Policy, the U.S. economic presence in Latin America had reached into every country. In South America, U.S. products accounted for 16.2 percent of imports in 1913 and by 1927 had grown to 26.8 percent. In the entire region, U.S. investments went from \$1.6 billion in 1914 to \$5.4 billion in 1929. Most U.S. companies were involved in the production and export of primary goods in both mining and agriculture. Facing less and less foreign competition, they settled into such industries as fruit, copper and other metal mining, coffee, rubber, sugar, tobacco, and oil.

Woodrow Wilson: More Continuity Than Change

When Woodrow Wilson was elected president in 1912, a new progressive era seemed to be dawning. He and his first secretary of state, William Jennings Bryan, openly criticized every aspect of dollar diplomacy. Wilson himself has gone down in history as the “idealist” former political science professor who tried in vain to establish a League of Nations that would finally bring peace to the world. In spite of this common image, the remarkable aspect of his policy toward Latin America was that it was virtually identical to that of Roosevelt and Taft. If anything, it involved more intervention and even disdain.

Wilson showed public concern over the degree of European (especially British) control over Latin American economies, which he believed was an Old World imperialist obstacle to true independence. This was a continued echo of the Monroe Doctrine, still going strong a decade or so after the Roosevelt Corollary. In 1913, he promised that the United States would act to promote “true constitutional liberty” in the region and said, “We must show ourselves friends by comprehending their interest whether it squares with our own interest or not.”¹⁰ Although his rhetoric was short on specifics, his actions spoke volumes and reflected an inherent contradiction: To protect

Latin America from foreign political and economic interference, the United States would have to interfere.

Like other presidents before him, Wilson viewed Latin America in openly paternalistic terms and considered stability to be the essential element missing in Latin American politics and economics. Moreover, U.S. national interests were closely tied to regional stability. Even though Wilson may have disagreed with the degree to which business interests had influenced policy in the past, he heartily agreed that economic opportunities would spur the U.S. economy and bring prosperity to the host country. During his two administrations, the U.S. government aggressively defended what it perceived to be its interests.

In the Dominican Republic, for example, Roosevelt and Taft had rearranged the country's finances, but Wilson proved even more active by occupying the entire country from 1916 until 1924, on the pretext that the Dominican government had exceeded the debt ceiling established in 1907. The occupation was the product of Wilson's brand of idealism, which emphasized the white man's burden. More civilized (and lighter-skinned) countries like the United States had the obligation to teach their less civilized (and darker-skinned) neighbors how to run a country. In addition to the now common control over customs houses, U.S. troops built roads, schools, and other infrastructure and improved sanitation and health conditions. This was only right and proper. In return, they (as well as the president himself) hoped for gratitude. What they often received was hostility, and they never understood why.

Woodrow Wilson and Mexico

The way Wilson responded to revolution in Mexico provides an excellent example of how intervention remained central to U.S. policy, despite changes of administration. Porfirio Díaz had taken power in 1876 and created a dictatorship imbued with liberal values, meaning that he invited foreign investment while promising (and usually delivering) the order demanded by investors for economic development and modernization to flourish. However, by the early twentieth century and especially after a 1907 depression, discontent arose in various quarters. Peasants and urban workers rightfully felt exploited by both domestic and foreign land and factory owners, and part of Díaz's promise of prosperity involved denying rights to these workers. Simultaneously, many domestic elites hit hard by the depression looked with dismay at foreign entrepreneurs, whose access to capital was undiminished, and they also resented the growing control of Díaz's government, which restricted regional decision making.

In 1910, armed struggle broke out, and the following year Díaz was toppled and Francisco Madero became president. President Taft accepted the

new government, but his ambassador, Henry Lane Wilson, disliked Madero intensely and soon began conspiring with former porfiristas to overthrow him. Madero's government, he later wrote, was "impotent in the face of domestic ills and disorders, and truculent, insolent, and insincere in its international relations."¹¹ Victoriano Huerta became his chosen favorite, and in 1913, with the ambassador's full support, Huerta's forces led a coup d'état and killed Madero in the process. Woodrow Wilson had just taken office, and as soon as he learned of the plot, he recalled the ambassador. He then sent an official to talk to Huerta to determine what should be done.

The report was not comforting. The overall assessment was that "General Huerta is an ape-like old man, of almost pure Indian blood. He may also be said to subsist on alcohol."¹² This offended Wilson in several ways. He was a strong proponent of democracy, and clearly Huerta had never won an election. But his moral rectitude also demanded that, as a civilized country, the United States must work to help Latin American governments learn good governance. The only way to do so was to oust any leader who did not live up to his standards. For Huerta, first the United States refused to recognize his government. However, Wilson also opened the U.S. border to allow arms shipments for anti-Huerta rebels and then in 1914 sent U.S. Marines to occupy Veracruz, a port city important for its customs revenue. Faced with diplomatic and military intervention, Huerta resigned and fled.

Despite Wilson's vocal preferences for "upstanding" leaders, he was not deaf to national security concerns and the legacies of the Monroe Doctrine, which came into play when World War I broke out in 1914. Many in Washington had become convinced that British oil interests were conspiring in Mexico, desperate to maintain oil supplies for the British military. Although Wilson eventually decided that British interests did not conflict with U.S. interests, the European war would become more important in the formulation of U.S. policy. Meanwhile, Mexican politics disintegrated ever further, as several rival groups fought each other. In 1915, Wilson extended diplomatic recognition to Venustiano Carranza, who came the closest to the president's idea of an effective leader.

In 1916, the rebel leader Pancho Villa, who in the past had already killed some U.S. citizens residing in Mexico, crossed the border into Columbus, New Mexico, in a raid that left nineteen dead. For Wilson, an attack on U.S. soil by someone the U.S. government viewed as a terrorist demanded retribution. The matter had again shifted from morals to national security. It was deemed unthinkable to allow the impression that the United States could be assaulted without punishment. In response, Wilson sent a "punitive expedition" of 6,000 soldiers under the command of General John J. Pershing, known for his successful battles against the Apaches. In 1916 and 1917, they probed all over northern Mexico, as far as a hundred miles south of the U.S. border, but never rooted out Pancho Villa, who moved around the vast territory with knowledge of the terrain and



Figure 4.1 “Still Coming,” by Lute Pease, 1916. Cartoon shows General John J. Pershing stamping out a nest of rattlesnakes (labeled “Villista,” “Bandit,” and “Cutthroat”). In 1916, President Wilson sent a Punitive Expedition commanded by Pershing into Mexico to capture the rebel and bandit leader Francisco “Pancho” Villa, who had been raiding American towns. Villa and his band eluded the American force. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. LC-USZ62-126803.

sympathy from the local population. Eventually the expedition clashed with the Mexican army, leaving fourteen U.S. soldiers dead. Wilson had to choose between declaring war on Mexico or pulling out, and he opted for the latter.

The decision to remove the troops was based largely on U.S. concern over World War I. Mexico was an unwelcome distraction at a time of great political turmoil in Europe. Moreover, the German Kaiser, knowing the United States would join forces with the British, was eager to keep it out of the war. To this end, he concocted a plan to create war between the United States and Mexico, which would mean the United States was too occupied to involve itself in Europe. Germany’s foreign secretary sent a telegram to his representative in Mexico, telling him to offer Mexico the territories lost in 1848 in return for joining Germany and going to war with the United States. Mexico could be protected with U-boats. The British intercepted the “Zimmerman telegram”

and eagerly relayed it to President Wilson as the spark that would bring the United States to Europe.

Once Wilson brought the United States into World War I (and after President Carranza officially rejected Zimmerman's offer), his attention toward Mexico waned. The main exception related to Mexico's new constitution, drafted in 1917. Article 27 gave the Mexican state the right to nationalize mineral resources (such as oil) and to expropriate private property. Seeing it as an assault on U.S. investments specifically and commerce more generally, Wilson threatened to withdraw recognition of the government, but the issue was not settled before both Wilson and Carranza were out of power. Wilson finished his two terms and was replaced by Warren Harding, and Alvaro Obregón ousted Carranza. Harding denied Obregón recognition while the oil issue remained pending. The dispute lumbered on, and finally in 1923 the Bucarelli Agreement (named for Bucarelli Street in Mexico City, where the meeting took place) exchanged diplomatic recognition for a Mexican declaration that oilfield owners could maintain ownership as long as they proved that drilling or other "positive" signs of use were ongoing. Nonetheless, the agreement—which was not a treaty—did not prevent further seizures of oilfields and constant legal and diplomatic wrangling.

The question of oil remained unresolved into the 1930s, a time when the revolution was being channeled into a political party, the Mexican Revolutionary Party, which was created in 1938. (It would become the Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI, which dominated Mexico until 2000.) The watershed event of the oil dispute occurred in 1938 under President Lázaro Cárdenas, who nationalized the oil industry. In a direct challenge to the demands of U.S. businesses, he said, "It is a good time to see if England and the United States, which talk so much about democracy and respect for the sovereignty of other countries, will in fact stand up to their spoken convictions when Mexico exercises its rights."¹³

The timing turned out to be perfect. Not only was President Franklin Roosevelt pursuing more cordial ties with Latin America, but also he had an eye on conflicts in Europe and therefore did not wish to become involved in a lengthy dispute with Mexico that might eventually jeopardize hemispheric solidarity. Instead, the two governments began a series of discussions that would lead in 1941 to an agreement on compensation for the lost property. President Cárdenas had successfully overcome powerful U.S. business interests.

The Mexican revolution and its legacy, with its strong nationalist flavor, fostered a curious relationship with the United States. Economic dependence—and even co-dependence—entailed a persistent need to negotiate agreements on trade, immigration, and investment, but it would be tempered by a streak of firm Mexican independence in both domestic and foreign policy. Whether the topic was oil companies, Fidel Castro in Cuba, socialism in Central America, or a distant war to topple

Saddam Hussein in Iraq, Mexican presidents would show themselves willing to withstand U.S. pressures by pursuing policies that openly defied the stated desires of the U.S. political leadership.

Wilson and Pan-Americanism

President Wilson had been aggressive in the case of Mexico, but not all of his initiatives involved intervention. He was active in promoting Pan-American agreements, building on the foundations laid by James Blaine twenty-five years earlier. The U.S. commitment to Pan-American ideals was shaky and had generally been associated with establishing reciprocal trade agreements rather than any feeling of togetherness or solidarity. Wilson acted to bring Latin American countries together to resolve disputes. In 1915, six countries had worked with the disparate parties in the Mexican civil war, albeit with little success. In 1916, Wilson proposed a Pan-American Treaty based on “the solid, eternal foundations of justice and humanity.”¹⁴ There was some resistance to the idea, especially from Chile, whose governments were always leery of any agreement that might question the territory conquered in the War of the Pacific (1879–1883). The outbreak of World War I also had a dampening effect by distracting Wilson and the U.S. Congress from their southern neighbors.

The greatest obstacles to Pan-American unity, however, were Wilson’s own foreign policy decisions in Latin America. It was hardly convincing to proclaim “the principles of absolute political equality among the states” while simultaneously chasing around northern Mexico and while invading and occupying multiple countries in Central America and the Caribbean.¹⁵ In addition, Chile was opposed because it did not want to submit its border dispute with Peru to international arbitration. Two other powerful South American countries—Argentina and Brazil—also showed a distinct lack of interest, and Wilson was forced to drop the proposal. Wilson himself seemed never to waver from the belief that he was acting according to the highest principles of morality, even as he acted strictly and quite obviously in the interests of U.S. security.

Cuba under the Platt Amendment

Meanwhile, Cubans had begun to chafe under the Platt Amendment, which constrained the decision-making latitude of Cuban leaders and did not resolve any of the liberal–conservative disputes that had carried over from the colonial period and erupted as soon as the first Cuban president, Tomás Estrada Palma, a conservative installed by the U.S. government, took office. In fact, in some ways it tended to exacerbate disputes. Both liberals and conservatives commonly appealed to the United States to intervene when political conflict became acute,

and both sides believed they would benefit from intervention. The U.S. government also kept a keen eye on the protection of the increasing numbers of U.S. citizens and their property within Cuba. The expansion of U.S. interests encompassed all areas of the Cuban economy and its society, though the cultivation and export of sugar was the most prominent economic activity.

In 1906, political disorder fostered precisely to seize U.S. attention prompted the Theodore Roosevelt administration to send marines (2,000 initially, with more than 5,000 soon to arrive) as a way to quell the violence, and Secretary of War William Howard Taft became governor of the island for a short time. Marines arrived again in 1912 and then stayed between 1917 and 1922. Very often, the presence of troops (or at times only the appearance of a ship at a port) was a direct response to strikes or some other form of labor agitation, which was of grave concern to U.S. business leaders in Cuba.

By the 1920s, a resurgent nationalism was beginning to surface in Cuba, fueled by an economic boom (dependent almost entirely on high sugar prices) after World War I and the realization that not only was Cuban sovereignty nonexistent, but also the United States seemed unwilling to depart. Cuban merchants in particular struggled to obtain greater political voice. They viewed the U.S. presence not as protection but rather as meddling.

The beginning of the end of the Platt Amendment began in 1925, when Gerardo Machado was elected president of Cuba. He cultivated the support of Cuban merchants as well as the U.S. government, and for several years he worked to spur economic development. He received loans from U.S. bankers, which, of course, had to be approved by the U.S. government, and also repressed labor to make Cuba more attractive for investment. Even in the face of growing domestic opposition, in 1927 Machado used a classic combination of corruption and intimidation to gain support for a reelection bid (he ran unopposed in 1928) and to convene a constitutional commission to increase the presidential term from four to six years. Cuban democracy was becoming even more of a fiction as Machado viciously attacked his opposition, especially labor.

A combination of events culminated in the abrogation of the Platt Amendment in 1934. The depression beginning in 1929 hit Cuba very hard, which exacerbated domestic opposition. A year later, the United States passed the Smoot–Hawley tariff, which immediately made Cuban sugar too expensive for U.S. consumers. The overall economic effect of these two factors was devastating. Lacking revenue to respond effectively to the crisis, Machado took the country even further into debt to pay for emergency social programs. As unrest escalated (including an unsuccessful coup in 1931), Cuban elites appealed once again to the United States to unseat Machado. He was seen as the obstacle to meaningful economic change, and despite distrust of the United States, many Cuban elites viewed their northern neighbor as the only force strong enough to effect political change.

In 1933, newly inaugurated President Franklin Roosevelt sent a mediator to negotiate a settlement that would not include overt U.S. intervention. The

proposals, however, involved more U.S. influence over Cuban politics as a way to restore order, which did not please those in the opposition who wanted the United States to assist in the process of political mediation but not to take over the country again. Ultimately, Cubans themselves created the conditions for Machado's ouster. A general strike gripped the country in mid-1933, and even the United States called openly for him to step aside. With that declaration, Machado's supporters—particularly the army—saw the handwriting on the wall and quickly deserted him. The dictator then fled the country.

The new president lacked widespread support, and immediately a group of disgruntled lower-ranking army officers began organizing, with the goal of forcing the government to accept its demands. But what began as an attempt to redress problems escalated into a coup as other Cubans joined together in the so-called Sergeants' Revolt. Led by Sergeant Fulgencio Batista, the troops forced out higher-ranking officers and installed a new civilian president, Ramón Grau San Martín. In a fever of nationalism and reform (which included, among many other things, minimum wages, maximum hours, and workers' compensation), Grau announced the end of the Platt Amendment.

In the United States, Grau's talk and action greatly alarmed the government and investors, both of which felt they had much to lose if he remained in office. Roosevelt refused to extend diplomatic recognition, which put Grau



Figure 4.2 Sergeant Batista, the new leader of Cuba, waves from the Capitol, Washington, D.C. 1938. Photo: Harris & Ewing, 1938. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division LC-DIG-hec-25357.

in limbo and encouraged even more political conflict. Within months the U.S. government turned directly to Batista, asking him to oust Grau. In late 1933, Batista complied and installed a new president, whom the United States immediately recognized. Cuban political stability was thus restored and, combined with the Good Neighbor Policy emphasis on improved relations, prompted the Roosevelt administration to abrogate the Platt Amendment. The only exception was U.S. control over naval bases. Cuba was compelled to agree that Guantánamo Bay would remain in U.S. hands for perpetuity. As its current prisoners know, at least for now that remains true.

From 1906 until 1934, Cuban politics was characterized by rapid, often violent changes of government, accompanied by U.S. intervention and, at times, control over the country's finances. The result was a political dependence on the United States on the part of many Cuban elites that never fully disappeared, despite periodic flashes of nationalism.

The Good Neighbor Policy

In 1933, President Roosevelt initiated a policy that would resonate within Latin America because, for the first time, a U.S. president seemed to be shedding the traditional mantle of power politics and hegemony. Roosevelt stated, "The essential qualities of a true Pan Americanism must be the same as those which constitute a good neighbor, namely, mutual understanding, and, through such understanding, a sympathetic appreciation of the other's point of view." Latin American leaders, though understandably wary, were willing to support Roosevelt and work with him on a vision of hemispheric understanding. As was clear from the continued intervention in Cuba, however, the policy did not represent a rejection of the use of power to advance U.S. interests.

Box 4.3 FDR's Good Neighbor Speech (1933)

I rejoice in this opportunity to participate in the celebration of "Pan American Day" and to extend on behalf of the people of the United States a fraternal greeting to our sister American Republics. The celebration of "Pan American Day" in this building, dedicated to international goodwill and cooperation, exemplifies a unity of thought and purpose among the peoples of this hemisphere. It is a manifestation of the common ideal of mutual helpfulness, sympathetic understanding and spiritual solidarity.

There is inspiration in the thought that on this day the attention of the citizens of the twenty-one Republics of America is focused on the

common ties—historical, cultural, economic, and social—which bind them to one another. Common ideals and a community of interest, together with a spirit of cooperation, have led to the realization that the well-being of one Nation depends in large measure upon the well-being of its neighbors. It is upon these foundations that Pan Americanism has been built.

This celebration commemorates a movement based upon the policy of fraternal cooperation. In my Inaugural Address I stated that I would “dedicate this Nation to the policy of the good neighbor—the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others—the neighbor who respects his obligations and respects the sanctity of his agreements in and with a world of neighbors.” Never before has the significance of the words “good neighbor” been so manifest in international relations. Never have the need and benefit of neighborly cooperation in every form of human activity been so evident as they are today.

Friendship among Nations, as among individuals, calls for constructive efforts to muster the forces of humanity in order that an atmosphere of close understanding and cooperation may be cultivated. It involves mutual obligations and responsibilities, for it is only by sympathetic respect for the rights of others and a scrupulous fulfillment of the corresponding obligations by each member of the community that a true fraternity can be maintained.

The essential qualities of a true Pan Americanism must be the same as those which constitute a good neighbor, namely, mutual understanding, and, through such understanding, a sympathetic appreciation of the other’s point of view. It is only in this manner that we can hope to build up a system of which confidence, friendship and goodwill are the cornerstones.

In this spirit the people of every Republic on our continent are coming to a deep understanding of the fact that the Monroe Doctrine, of which so much has been written and spoken for more than a century was and is directed at the maintenance of independence by the peoples of the continent. It was aimed and is aimed against the acquisition in any manner of the control of additional territory in this hemisphere by any non-American power.

Hand in hand with this Pan American doctrine of continental self-defense, the peoples of the American Republics understand more clearly, with the passing years, that the independence of each Republic must recognize the independence of every other Republic. Each one of us must grow by an advancement of civilization and social well-being and not by the acquisition of territory at the expense of any neighbor.

In this spirit of mutual understanding and of cooperation on this continent you and I cannot fail to be disturbed by any armed strife between neighbors. I do not hesitate to say to you, the distinguished members of the Governing Board of the Pan American Union, that I regard existing conflicts between four of our sister Republics as a backward step.

Your Americanism and mine must be a structure built of confidence cemented by a sympathy which recognizes only equality and fraternity. It finds its source and being in the hearts of men and dwells in the temple of the intellect.

We all of us have peculiar problems, and, to speak frankly, the interest of our own citizens must, in each instance, come first. But it is equally true that it is of vital importance to every Nation of this Continent that the American Governments, individually, take, without further delay, such action as may be possible to abolish all unnecessary and artificial barriers and restrictions which now hamper the healthy flow of trade between the peoples of the American Republics.

I am glad to deliver this message to you, Gentlemen of the Governing Board of the Pan American Union, for I look upon the Union as the outward expression of the spiritual unity of the Americas. It is to this unity which must be courageous and vital in its element that humanity must look for one of the great stabilizing influences in world affairs.

Source: Franklin Roosevelt, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, vol. 2 (New York: Random House, 1938): 129–133.

Although Roosevelt had given official voice to this Good Neighbor Policy, it was not entirely original and was intermestic, responding to political pressures within the United States that had gained ground in the 1920s. After Wilson left office, U.S. political parties and their constituents' interest in Latin America had dwindled. There were periodic diplomatic negotiations, such as the 1923 General Treaty of Peace and Amity with Central American countries that would deny diplomatic recognition to any government taking power through a coup and end political interference between the countries. In other cases, however, such as during the Sixth Pan-American Conference in 1928, the United States flatly rejected pleas to open its markets by reducing tariffs. In general, as the 1920s wore on, the primary concern of both politicians and the public in the United States was to reduce its presence and public expenditure in Latin America.

When the blood of U.S. soldiers was shed in Nicaragua, resistance grew to fighting in other countries, especially when the "national interest" seemed ill defined. The stock market crash of 1929 and ensuing depression broadened

the scope of isolationism because it became difficult to justify spending any money outside the United States. President Hoover supported being a better neighbor and bringing troops home. In fact, after being elected he asked President Coolidge for a ship so he could take an extended trip to Latin America, where he visited ten countries. In speeches there he used the term “good neighbor.” In his memoirs he was highly critical of his predecessors, Democrats and Republicans alike, for fostering hostility:

Moreover, our “dollar diplomacy,” by threats and intimidation on behalf of our speculative citizens when their investments went wrong, added fuel to the fire. The policy of military intervention by the Wilson Administration had been continued by Harding and Coolidge.¹⁶

Hoover did not spell out a coherent policy framework in the same way Roosevelt would, but he was already moving the United States in a new direction.

For Roosevelt, the policy was framed as something that benefited everyone. Not only would it end costly occupations, but it would also promote goodwill at a time of tremendous global uncertainty, especially given the rise of fascism in Europe. There were crucial strategic areas in Latin America (most notably the Panama Canal), but various countries also had important natural resources, so hostile governments or foreign intervention could therefore threaten U.S. access to them. The administration therefore could argue that it was entirely positive for the United States.

The practical impact of the Good Neighbor Policy was felt almost instantly. In 1934, the United States cut many tariffs and established reciprocal trading agreements. For Latin American presidents, this welcome move brought badly needed foreign exchange, though it would also have the effect of further tying some economies (such as Cuba’s) to the United States. It also meant ending the sometimes decades-long era of occupation. In 1933 at the Seventh International Conference of American States, the U.S. delegation agreed to the Convention on the Rights and Duties of States that included “No state has the right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of another,” though the U.S. argued it would also adhere to “the law of nations as generally recognized and accepted,” which was understood as allowing intervention to protect its own citizens.¹⁷ This meant accepting the essence of the Calvo Doctrine with its rejection of intervention, which the U.S. had refused to accept decades earlier. But theory and practice are very different animals.

The United States negotiated a new treaty with Panama as well. In 1931, *Acción Comunal*, a nationalist organization, took power through a coup. It was dedicated to shrinking the U.S. presence and had the slogan “Panama for the Panamanians.”¹⁸ The government began pressing for a reform of the 1903 treaty, and in Franklin Roosevelt finally found a willing ear. The result

was a new treaty in 1936 (though a reluctant U.S. Congress would not vote favorably on it until 1939), which eliminated Panama's protectorate status, raised the annual payment for the canal, and offered a number of other changes; for example, Panamanians had previously been banned from operating radio stations. The treaty bolstered the position of Acción Comunal's leadership, which moved to utilize the national police (Panama was still prohibited from raising a military) for its own political ends.

There were plenty of snags along the way. For example, when the Roosevelt administration refused to recognize the Grau government in Cuba in 1933, officials argued that the decision did not constitute "intervention," especially because it was intended to forestall the need for military action. Yet, despite such caveats, U.S. policy did represent something new.

The Good Neighbor Policy soon explicitly encompassed hemispheric security as well. The rise of the Nazi party and Adolf Hitler's ascension to power in Germany in 1933, the Japanese invasion of China in 1937, and the eruption of other conflicts raised the distinct possibility that war in Europe or even Asia was in the offing. By 1935, Roosevelt began to push for inter-American agreements to address potential extrahemispheric threats. Chapter 5 addresses the policy shift back toward security and the Latin American response to it.

Summary and Conclusion

In the first third of the twentieth century, U.S. political and economic influence in Latin America grew, and the imbalance of power became even more apparent. Regardless of the different stated public positions of U.S. presidents, the relationship with Latin America remained based firmly in the concept of security, and the advancement of U.S. economic development became intertwined with security. The U.S. government proudly proclaimed its hegemonic position, which perhaps was a simple extension of Manifest Destiny. Power thus was transformed into a historic mission.

The specter of European intervention was still relevant, and the Roosevelt corollary to the Monroe Doctrine was the response, a way for the United States to prevent European incursion and, as policy makers of the time believed, to help Latin American countries arrange their affairs properly, which they seemed unable to do on their own. Dollar diplomacy, with its tight (though not unwavering) connection between government and business, went hand in hand with the Roosevelt corollary. Under President Wilson, who espoused a deeply felt moral obligation to bring democracy to the rest of the world, U.S. troops were sent to more countries, and occupation was the norm in countries such as Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua. This combination meant that hegemony and "democratic promotion" were one and the same.

With only a few exceptions, such as Venezuela, the U.S. government showed little interest in South America, choosing to focus, at times very intensely, on Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. However, U.S. businesses were beginning to demonstrate great interest in the entire region. The era of dollar diplomacy had seen U.S. investors and troops move ceaselessly, as diplomacy and money worked closely together. This was dependency theory in action as a steady stream of commodities flowed outward from Latin America while finished goods from the United States flowed inward. Only with President Franklin Roosevelt's enunciation of the Good Neighbor Policy did the United States assert the integrity and sovereignty of Latin American countries.

The Good Neighbor Policy poses a challenge to a realist perspective of this era. It seemed to turn security on its head in favor of an intermestic policy that sought to placate domestic interests in the context of economic depression. Nonetheless, Roosevelt did not disregard security, as demonstrated by his vigilant eye on Europe and Asia and his use of military and political leverage against Latin America when deemed necessary. Moreover, as we will see, the time of the good neighbor was a policy hiccup, to be rather rapidly jettisoned in the face of a new postwar threat.

In Latin America, some politicians and business leaders endeavored to take whatever gain they could from the U.S. presence, thus acknowledging (and even accepting) the power imbalance. Many elites made handsome profits and/or were catapulted to positions of political authority. Beyond this small group, however, brewed a nationalist and increasingly anti-U.S. sentiment, fueled by poverty, occupation, and mistreatment. These movements would require long incubation before they would explode, but their roots lay in the first third of the twentieth century. There is a causal link between U.S. policy and the creation of organizations and rebellions that would later during the Cold War be viewed as subversive and Communist.

Latin American invocation of international law also continued, as the Drago Doctrine was another step (building on Calvo's thesis of nonintervention) toward using reasoned legal arguments to counter U.S. hegemony. Although they had no immediate policy impact, together they constituted the first halting steps toward the creation of international regimes.

Ironically, the nonintervention angle of the Good Neighbor Policy had the direct result of snuffing out any chances of democracy in numerous countries. Not only did President Roosevelt not intervene when violent changes of government occurred, but also he and his cabinet refused even to condemn them. Dictators who would later become international icons of brutality and corruption, such as Somoza and Trujillo, owed their positions in part to the Good Neighbor Policy. However, the clouds of war were already dark, and by the end of World War II the Good Neighbor Policy would be largely discarded, replaced by the exigencies of a new, "colder" conflict.

Research Questions

1. During the first third of the twentieth century, to what degree was U.S. intervention (both political and economic) requested by Latin American political elites versus simply being imposed?
2. What were the most prominent responses by Latin American leaders to dollar diplomacy? How effective were they at challenging U.S. hegemony?
3. When President Woodrow Wilson took office, what were the most important changes in U.S. policy toward Latin America, and what aspects of that policy remained the same?
4. In what specific ways did the Good Neighbor Policy represent a significant shift in U.S. policy? In what ways did it maintain continuity from the policies of previous administrations?
5. In what ways can dependency theory contribute to an understanding of U.S. intervention in the first third of the twentieth century?

Notes

- 1 Acereda and Derusha 2001, 169.
- 2 Quoted in Gilderhus 2000, 30.
- 3 Quoted in Bermann 1986, 146.
- 4 Quoted in Schoultz 1998, 219.
- 5 Quoted in Pastor 1987, 27–28.
- 6 Quoted in Pastor 1987, 22.
- 7 Beals 1940, 301.
- 8 Pérez 1990, 149.
- 9 Chapman 2007, 83.
- 10 Quoted in Holden and Zolov 2000, 111.
- 11 Wilson 1927, 242–243.
- 12 Quoted in Schoultz 1998, 242.
- 13 Quoted in Raat 1996, 143.
- 14 Quoted in Gilderhus 2000, 48.
- 15 Quoted in Gilderhus 2000, 48.
- 16 Hoover 1952, 210.
- 17 Gil 1971, 157.
- 18 Conniff 2001, 89.

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Websites

- The Sandino Rebellion.** This website was created by Michael Schroeder, an Assistant Professor of History at Lebanon Valley College. It has an extensive collection of documents related to Augusto Sandino and also includes a large bibliography on the topic. <http://www.sandinorebellion.com/>
- Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States 1914, Supplement, the World War.** As part of the FRUS collection, there are numerous documents related specifically to the efforts to make sure that Latin America was remaining neutral. That tended to involve constant communication with the British government. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1914Supp/ch34>
- Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Cuba 1906.** The University of Wisconsin has many FRUS documents digitized that are not yet available on the State Department's website. This particular collection involves the U.S. occupation of Cuba, including the message President Theodore Roosevelt sent to the Cuban foreign minister invoking the Platt Amendment to occupy the country. <http://digidoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=turn&entity=FRUS.FRUS1906v01.p0560&id=FRUS.FRUS1906v01&size=M>
- Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library.** The library's website has access to more than 13,000 pages of documents. A search engine makes it possible to find documents according to region or country. The site also offers a bibliography and other means to find more information on Roosevelt's policies. <http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/>
- U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Mexican Border Service Photograph Collection.** The U.S. Army has a fascinating collection of photographs of activity on the U.S.–Mexico border between 1914 and 1917, the period of the punitive expedition against Pancho Villa. <http://cdm16635.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16635coll4/id/3385>

The Early Cold War Period

Timeline

1939–1945	World War II
1947	Rio Treaty signed
1948	Organization of American States formed
1949	Creation of the Economic Commission for Latin America
1951	Mutual Security Act signed
1954	Invasion of Guatemala and overthrow of Jacobo Arbenz
1958	Vice President Nixon attacked in Venezuela
1959	Creation of Inter-American Development Bank
1959	Cuban revolution; Batista flees Cuba

The relationship between the United States and Latin America took a significant turn in the 1920s and 1930s. Economic and political dependence remained in place, but Franklin Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy gave U.S.–Latin American relations a new hue, one based more on respect for sovereignty and acknowledgment of equality. Yet it was a difficult time. The Great Depression had led to economic disasters, and Latin American political leaders found themselves ever deeper in debt and unable to contain the rising demands of their impoverished populations. Many countries succumbed to dictatorships during the 1930s, and in some cases the United States either accepted them or had played an active role in creating them. As discussed in Chapter 4, Roosevelt's policy did not mean giving up the right to wield U.S.

power, even to the point of forcing out a government (as in Cuba). Being a good neighbor did not entail a rejection of power politics.

Following a realist perspective, this chapter examines how the early Cold War (that is, prior to the Cuban revolution) brought national security and self-interest once again squarely to the fore. During this time, U.S. policy makers took for granted that Latin American politics were intimately related to the overall struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union. Latin American leaders were acutely aware of that fact and made strategic choices about the direction their countries would take. This might mean allying with the United States, opposing it, or simply seeking to extract as many benefits as possible from the situation without explicitly taking sides.

The Effects of World War II

As the 1930s progressed, the United States began to view Latin America increasingly in security terms. Economic factors had certainly not disappeared, but foreign policy reflected preoccupation with European politics. German aggression and imperial aspirations represented a potential threat to the Western Hemisphere. At the Eighth Pan-American Conference in 1938, the United States pushed for an accord to counter any European-inspired belligerence. Two agreements came from the meeting. The first was the Declaration of Lima, which stipulated that if the security of any American state were threatened, the foreign ministers of all countries would meet to determine a hemispheric response. The second was the Declaration of American Principles, which reaffirmed the ideals of “nonintervention, peaceful settlement of disputes, proscription of the use of force as an instrument of national or international policy, respect for the precepts of international law and faithful observance of treaties, intellectual interchange among peoples, and satisfactory economic relations.”¹ For the time being, these agreements meant that the United States had been successful in convincing Latin Americans that its chronic habit of intervention was being cured.

World War II made South America a much greater foreign policy priority for the United States, and the threat posed by Germany was real. Soon after the outbreak of war in 1939, German ships began coming close to the eastern shores of South America, and one was chased and sunk by the British navy. Their intent was not invasion but rather harassment of ships carrying munitions and supplies to the Allies. In 1940, the nations of the Americas signed several new agreements. At the second meeting of foreign ministers in Havana, delegates agreed to a new “no transfer” policy (known as the Act of Havana), whereby no territory controlled by a non-American country could transfer ownership to another non-American country. In other words, Germany could not take possession of territory in the hemisphere, specifically Dutch, French, or British colonies in the Caribbean. There was also a

Declaration of Reciprocal Assistance and Cooperation, asserting that an act of aggression against one American state would be considered aggression against all.

During the war, the United States needed Latin American support more than ever before, and the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 made that even more apparent. The United States formally entered the war and immediately required assistance in maintaining the security of supply lines, which were endangered by German U-boats that sank their first U.S. ship in 1942. The United States therefore worked to establish naval bases in several Latin American countries to make patrols easier. The United States also needed access to a number of raw materials that were integral to the war effort. In addition to the obvious example of oil, there was also demand for rubber, asbestos, tin, manganese, zinc, and tungsten. Such a pressing demand gave the United States incentive to cultivate friendlier relations. On the diplomatic side, the United States government did its best to market U.S. culture to Latin America, through movies, radio, and books. This was intended to show how alliance was a natural outgrowth of cultural similarity.

Countries like Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, and Paraguay had significant sympathy for Germany and the Axis powers in general, which sometimes complicated efforts at hemispheric unity. Sympathies were due in part to the popularity of fascism (or at least its Latin American variant) and partly related to national self-interest. There was much to be gained by remaining neutral and attempting to trade with all sides. During World War I, that strategy had often proved lucrative. Argentina was especially reluctant to declare war and did not do so until March 1945, when the outcome was already clear. This frustrated U.S. policy makers and would lead in 1946 to a tactical error that was hardly good neighborly. Hoping to prevent the election of Juan Perón as president, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Spruille Braden wrote the “Blue Book on Argentina,” denouncing Argentina’s position on the war and by extension Perón’s role in it (although not president during the war, he wielded tremendous influence), and had it distributed in Argentina. Perón used the report to his advantage with the campaign slogan “Perón or Braden?” and won.

Latin American Militaries

World War II had another important consequence, the creation of relationships between the U.S. and Latin American militaries. Before the war, such ties did not exist to any significant degree because the U.S. government and its armed forces viewed their counterparts as antiquated, backward, and lacking professionalism. Even before Pearl Harbor, the United States had signed bilateral lend-lease agreements for war matériel with several countries, and after December 1941 such agreements spread across the hemisphere.

(The notable exception was Argentina.) During the war, the amount of lend-lease aid reached almost \$500 million.

Nonetheless, there was not a sudden sprouting of respect for the militaries of the region. In 1943, a U.S. admiral said of them, “They have never served a useful purpose so far as we are concerned. ... I have wracked my brain for something for them to do. ... I am willing to give them anything we can with the understanding that they simply make suggestions and that we don’t have to pay any attention to them.”²

Latin American officers, however, often evinced a keen interest in being taught and trained by the United States (not to mention Great Britain, France, and Germany). Simultaneously, they were borrowing and adapting geopolitical doctrines that would lead to “professional militarism,” in which the military viewed itself as the central national actor in the struggle against subversion.³ In the 1950s and 1960s, military journals across the region were filled with articles on that general topic, in which officers proclaimed that the armed forces constituted the last bastion of Western civilization. Cooperation with the United States was not only useful but also necessary to preserve all that was orderly and good.

At this time, the policy process in Latin America became more complex than ever. Strong forces—military, labor, left, right, you name it—pulled in different directions, and all wanted to play a policy role. Politics remained highly presidential, but grassroots movements, embodied by large-scale protests or even riots, forced new voices into the mix. Combined with the growth of electoral democracy, where voting mattered, the demands of the dispossessed and discontent could not be ignored. And that made both Latin American and U.S. policy makers nervous.

The Cold War Begins

The alliance between the Soviet Union and the United States established during World War II was based on having a mutual enemy (Germany) and once that enemy lay in ruins the partnership disintegrated. The ideological bent of both countries fostered deep antagonism, as each believed (often correctly) that the other’s main goal was destruction of their political system and their very way of life. The idea that a “cold” war ensued is misleading, because it refers only to the fact that the two countries never engaged in direct combat with each other. For much of the rest of the world, this “cold” war, which would last from the late 1940s until the beginning of the 1990s, was hot and also bitter, destructive, and murderous. Latin America would feel the effects within only a few years.

In particular, the U.S. government became less willing to swallow reforms (such as land redistribution) within Latin American countries that had any socialist flavor, even though the United States itself had been undergoing

similar progressive reforms during the Roosevelt administration. Yet such reformist movements were gaining momentum in a number of countries. Although the United States had often been skeptical of reform (the Mexican revolution being a clear example), the Cold War sharpened its suspicion. Many in the U.S. government believed that such reforms were the thin edge of a wedge that would impose a Moscow-controlled Communist dictatorship. It was therefore the duty of the international community, or the United States alone if necessary, to prevent that from happening.

Evidence suggests, however, that the influence of the Soviet Union in the early Cold War period was minimal. It was not able to achieve diplomatic and commercial relations with most Latin American countries until the late 1960s. The Soviets had few historical ties to the region, and most Communist parties—one of the key avenues for Soviet influence—were weak. The exceptions were Argentina and Mexico, where the Soviet Union had established trade relations not long after the Russian revolution (and it is no coincidence that both countries had historically prickly relationships with the United States). Even in Chile, where the Communist (and Socialist) party had existed for decades, the government outlawed the party from 1948 to 1958. Communists rarely found a political toehold. Fidel Castro and the Cuban revolution owed nothing to Moscow. Fearing U.S. reprisals, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev did not approve sending arms to Castro until four days before his victory, so they arrived too late to be of any use.

The perception of imminent threat was therefore largely exaggerated. Nonetheless, the Soviet Union was making a concerted effort to expand its presence in the hemisphere, especially economically. As a newly industrializing power, it required new markets to sell manufactured goods into and earn hard currency. It was also encouraging and funding members of individual Communist parties to become more active in political and student organizations, which raised their profile. Very often, however, the overall message was far from revolutionary. In Cuba, for example, during the 1950s the Communist party favored working with the political system for reform instead of going to the mountains to fight. Overall, during this period the Soviet Union did not yet have the diplomatic, military, or economic leverage necessary to establish itself firmly in Latin America, yet the United States insisted it should be viewed as a far-reaching power with its tentacles probing into nearly all aspects of Latin American life.

This new ideological intensity occurred when many Latin American countries were beginning to show signs of serious internal conflict. From the early 1930s until the end of World War II, there were elections and civilian governments at various times in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. It was a remarkable period of democratic rule. But in the decade after 1945, they would begin succumbing to coups d'état. Reformist movements that had gained ground within a democratic context were labeled "Communist" by domestic political and

economic elites, as well as the U.S. government and its diplomatic representatives. A new and much less democratic era had begun.

It was also apparent that the Good Neighbor Policy had not changed the views of U.S. policy makers and diplomats toward their Latin American counterparts. In the 1940s, many embassies wrote reports detailing the “national character” of their host countries.⁴ Cubans, for example, were marked by vanity and “are prone to be extremely nervous, which, coupled with a tendency to stomach and liver disorders, frequently make them short-tempered and excitable,” while the typical Cuban peasant “has little ambition or drive but in spite of his wretchedness is fairly content with his lot and resists change.”⁵ Surveying the world as the Cold War began, Harry Truman’s Secretary of State Dean Acheson wrote of Latin America:

Here Hispano-Indian culture—or lack of it—had been piling up its problems for centuries. An explosive population, stagnant economy, archaic society, primitive politics, massive ignorance, illiteracy, and poverty—all had contributed generously to the creation of many local crises, tending to merge into a continental one.⁶

Policy after the war would reflect this persisting and prevailing paternalistic attitude. Eisenhower himself spoke to his ambassador to Mexico about Mexicans saying, “You know, they’re rascals at heart. You can’t trust them and so forth, but they’re lovable types.”⁷

Security in the Hemisphere

The issue of hemispheric security very quickly became prominent. Soon after the end of World War II, the nations of the Americas signed two enduring agreements. The first was the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (the “Rio Treaty”) in 1947, and the second was the charter of the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1948. Both of them were aimed directly at the perceived threat of Communism.

The Rio Treaty had its roots in a 1945 conference held in Mexico City’s Chapultepec Castle. It reinforced the commitment to regional security and affirmed that the “maintenance of international peace” would be in accord with the United Nations, which was then being formed. Latin American delegates were disappointed, however, that the United States refused to include economic aid as part of any agreement. They saw the extensive aid the United States provided Europe through the Marshall Plan right after World War II and wondered why that could not be a model. Security and economics were treated as separate issues. Nonetheless, all parties pursued—albeit with different motives—the completion of a new security pact, because the Act of Chapultepec expired at the end of the war.

Box 5.1 Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty) (1947)

In the name of their Peoples, the Governments represented at the Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Continental Peace and Security, desirous of consolidating and strengthening their relations of friendship and good neighborliness, and Considering:

That the High Contracting Parties reaffirm their adherence to the principles of inter-American solidarity and cooperation, and especially to those set forth in the preamble and declarations of the Act of Chapultepec, all of which should be understood to be accepted as standards of their mutual relations and as the juridical basis of the Inter-American System;

That the obligation of mutual assistance and common defense of the American Republics is essentially related to their democratic ideals and to their will to cooperate permanently in the fulfillment of the principles and purposes of a policy of peace;

That the American regional community affirms as a manifest truth that juridical organization is a necessary prerequisite of security and peace, and that peace is founded on justice and moral order and, consequently, on the international recognition and protection of human rights and freedoms, on the indispensable well-being of the people, and on the effectiveness of democracy for the international realization of justice and security,

Have resolved, in conformity with the objectives stated above, to conclude the following Treaty, in order to assure peace, through adequate means, to provide for effective reciprocal assistance to meet armed attacks against any American State, and in order to deal with threats of aggression against any of them:

Article 1

The High Contracting Parties formally condemn war and undertake in their international relations not to resort to the threat or the use of force in any manner inconsistent with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations or of this Treaty.

Article 2

As a consequence of the principle set forth in the preceding Article, the High Contracting Parties undertake to submit every controversy which may arise between them to methods of peaceful settlement and to endeavor to settle any such controversy among themselves by means of the procedures in force in the Inter-American System before referring it to the General Assembly or the Security Council of the United Nations.

Article 3

1. The High Contracting Parties agree that an armed attack by any State against an American State shall be considered as an attack against all the American States and, consequently, each one of the said Contracting Parties undertakes to assist in meeting the attack in the exercise of the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.
2. On the request of the State or States directly attacked and until the decision of the Organ of Consultation of the Inter-American System, each one of the Contracting Parties may determine the immediate measures which it may individually take in fulfillment of the obligation contained in the preceding paragraph and in accordance with the principle of continental solidarity. The Organ of Consultation shall meet without delay for the purpose of examining those measures and agreeing upon the measures of a collective character that should be taken.
3. The provisions of this Article shall be applied in case of any armed attack which takes place within the region described in Article 4 or within the territory of an American State. When the attack takes place outside of the said areas, the provisions of Article 6 shall be applied.
4. Measures of self-defense provided for under this Article may be taken until the Security Council of the United Nations has taken the measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.

Article 6

If the inviolability or the integrity of the territory or the sovereignty or political independence of any American State should be affected by an aggression which is not an armed attack or by an extra-continental or intra-continental conflict, or by any other fact or situation might endanger the peace of America, the Organ of Consultation shall meet immediately in order to agree on the measures which must be taken in case of aggression to assist the victim of the aggression or, in any case, the measures which should be taken for the common defense and for the maintenance of the peace and security of the Continent.

Article 7

In the case of a conflict between two or more American States, without prejudice to the right of self-defense in conformity with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, the High Contracting Parties, meeting in consultation shall call upon the contending States

to suspend hostilities and restore matters to the status quo ante bellum, and shall take in addition all other necessary measures to reestablish or maintain inter-American peace and security and for the solution of the conflict by peaceful means. The rejection of the pacifying action will be considered in the determination of the aggressor and in the application of the measures which the consultative meeting may agree upon.

Article 8

For the purposes of this Treaty, the measures on which the Organ of Consultation may agree will comprise one or more of the following: recall of chiefs of diplomatic missions; breaking of diplomatic relations; breaking of consular relations; partial or complete interruption of economic relations or of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, telephonic, and radiotelephonic or radiotelegraphic communications; and use of armed force.

Source: <http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/Treaties/b-29.html>

The interests of the United States were very clear. The Truman administration wanted a mechanism through which Communist aggression could be counteracted. From that perspective, the United States would always play the lead, and the Rio Treaty would provide the necessary cloak of legality. For Latin American delegates, the treaty's appeal was different. Although many were concerned about extrahemispheric threats, an additional goal was to raise a barrier against U.S. intervention that was grounded in international law. Latin American governments could then potentially utilize the Rio Treaty to address U.S. actions.

The charter of the Organization of American States emerged from a Bogotá conference in 1948. It had multiple structures for decision making and conflict resolution, the most important of which was the General Assembly, and all member countries sent a delegate. Another key organ was the Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The charter members of the OAS were the United States and twenty Latin American countries, though over time membership would be expanded to Caribbean nations whose colonial origin was not Spanish or Portuguese. Over time, the organizational structure of the OAS branched out considerably to address specific issues, such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (1959), Inter-American Juridical Committee (1972), the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (1986), and the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (1999). It was headquartered in Washington, D.C.

Box 5.2 Charter of the Organization of American States (1948)

Article 1

The American States establish by this Charter the international organization that they have developed to achieve an order of peace and justice, to promote their solidarity, to strengthen their collaboration, and to defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity and their independence. Within the United Nations, the Organization of American States is a regional agency.

Article 4

The Organization of American States, in order to put into practice the principles on which it is founded and to fulfill its regional obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, proclaims the following essential purposes:

- a. To strengthen the peace and security of the continent;
- b. To prevent possible causes of difficulties and to ensure the pacific settlement of disputes that may arise among the Member States;
- c. To provide for common action on the part of those States in the event of aggression;
- d. To seek the solution of political, juridical and economic problems that may arise among them; and
- e. To promote, by cooperative action, their economic, social and cultural development.

Article 5

The American States reaffirm the following principles:

- a. International law is the standard of conduct of States in their reciprocal relations;
- b. International order consists essentially of respect for the personality, sovereignty and independence of States, and the faithful fulfillment of obligations derived from treaties and other sources of international law;
- c. Good faith shall govern the relations between States;
- d. The solidarity of the American States and the high aims which are sought through it require the political organization of those States on the basis of the effective exercise of representative democracy;
- e. The American States condemn war of aggression: victory does not give rights;
- f. An act of aggression against one American State is an act of aggression against all the other American States;

- g. Controversies of an international character arising between two or more American States shall be settled by peaceful procedures;
- h. Social justice and social security are bases of lasting peace;
- i. Economic cooperation is essential to the common welfare and prosperity of the peoples of the continent;
- j. The American States proclaim the fundamental rights of the individual without distinction as to race, nationality, creed or sex;
- k. The spiritual unity of the continent is based on respect for the cultural values of the American countries and requires their close cooperation for the high purposes of civilization;
- l. The education of peoples should be directed toward justice, freedom and peace.

Article 15

No State or group of States has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other State. The foregoing principle prohibits not only armed force but also any other form of interference or attempted threat against the personality of the State or against its political, economic and cultural elements.

Article 24

Every act of aggression by a State against the territorial integrity or the inviolability of the territory or against the sovereignty or political independence of an American State shall be considered an act of aggression against the other American States.

Article 29

The Member States agree upon the desirability of developing their social legislation on the following bases:

- a. All human beings, without distinction as to race, nationality, sex, creed or social condition, have the right to attain material well-being and spiritual growth under circumstances of liberty, dignity, equality of opportunity, and economic security;
- b. Work is a right and a social duty; it shall not be considered as an article of commerce; it demands respect for freedom of association and for the dignity of the worker; and it is to be performed under conditions that ensure life, health and a decent standard of living, both during the working years and during old age, or when any circumstance deprives the individual of the possibility of working.

During those initial meetings, Bogotá itself seethed with unrest and distinctly anti-U.S. sentiments. This coincided with the assassination of popular presidential candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán. Violence gripped the Colombian capital for several days. Most of the delegates (including retired General George C. Marshall) blamed the Communists, and they were not entirely wrong. But Colombian Communists were only tapping into a deep mine of hostility. The incidents left a strong impression on a young—barely more than twenty years old—Fidel Castro, who had gone with other Cuban students to participate in the protests. In Colombia, they triggered what became known as “*la Violencia*,” roughly a decade of intense political conflict that left 200,000 dead.

In addition to those diplomatic accords, the U.S. Mutual Security Act of 1951 sought to establish U.S. dominance over the arms trade in Latin America, thus displacing European sellers. It therefore reinforced the military relationships begun during World War II. Before the war, both Great Britain and Germany served as examples to Latin American militaries and over the years had sent advisors and arms. South American militaries often owed more of their doctrine to Europe than to the United States. World War II, however, had left Germany in rubble and destroyed its historically militaristic tendencies, and Great Britain was too weakened and distracted to play a prominent military role in Latin America. The United States filled this vacuum with a large amount of surplus equipment.

In 1952, Ecuador under José María Velasco Ibarra became the first country to sign a defense pact that would provide “equipment, materials, services, and other military assistance designed to promote the defense and maintain the peace of the Western Hemisphere.”⁸ These agreements went hand in hand with the development of a U.S. Army training facility in the Panama Canal Zone. Although initially focused solely on professional military issues, after the Cuban revolution in 1959 it would become more ideologically oriented and in 1963 would be renamed the United States Army School of the Americas.

Most Latin American militaries espoused deeply anti-Communist doctrine and at the same time lacked the technical skills and weapons they believed were necessary for an effective twentieth-century fighting force. They were therefore open to the idea of receiving U.S. influence and aid to fill the gap. The U.S. government did not create the anti-Communist views of the armed forces of the region, but it certainly encouraged their continued development. They also had not tended to receive much guidance from their own civilian governments and so were open to hearing the U.S. view.

When voting to approve military agreements, the U.S. Congress was under no illusions about their effects. As Senator Russell Long noted even as he voted in favor, the main result “is to provide some dictators with tanks and planes with which to murder their own people when their people try to throw them out.”⁹ The agreements continued, however, because no member of Congress wished to be viewed as “soft” on Communism and they were inexpensive to boot. By the Cuban revolution, this intermestic political reality

was evident. Policy toward Latin America was often based largely on whether the U.S. public might view a given decision as caving in to Communism or if the opposition could grab hold of it. Political opponents could wave any sign of a failure to fight Communism—even in such small terms such as voting for military aid—as evidence to oust an incumbent.

A similar dilemma held for Latin American presidents as well, as they decried arms buildups while trying to appear tough on Communism. For example, in 1960 Chilean and Peruvian diplomats asked the United States to limit arms sales to Latin America while simultaneously making their own armament requests. The fight against Communism was gaining momentum, and with strong support from the U.S. government, Latin American economic elites, and the armed forces, the military response to the Cold War escalated.

Reactions to Revolutions: Bolivia and Guatemala

Two interconnected developments in U.S.–Latin American relations came to a head soon after the Cold War began. The first was an effort on the part of many Latin American political activists to enact reform, especially with regard to land. All over the region—though most notably in Central America—a small elite owned the best land, and the majority of the population remained landless and under the tight control of landowners. Land reform involved breaking large landholdings into smaller pieces that could then be distributed to peasants. Of course, Communist and Socialist parties were not only supportive of such reform but also often spearheaded it. The second development was the belief among U.S. policy makers and many within the Latin American upper classes that reform was simply a Communist Trojan horse in weak states that would eventually lead to a Moscow-controlled dictatorship. As such, very often only the use of U.S. economic and military power would be sufficient to combat such a threat.

In Central America, these issues were combined with a high level of dependence on the United States for exports, because the vast majority of Central American products went there. In 1948, the numbers were striking: 90 percent of Guatemalan exports were destined for the United States, with El Salvador at 76 percent, Honduras at 70 percent, Nicaragua at 74 percent, and Costa Rica at 78 percent.¹⁰ Across the region, the 1940s and 1950s marked a time of significant dependency because on average 63 percent of exports went to the United States, compared with 48 percent at the turn of the century. (By the 1980s, the average would be down to 32 percent.)¹¹

Bolivia

The first test of breaking that dependency would come in Bolivia, where in 1952 a triumphant revolution led by the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR) swept the country. It began a series of reforms that included land

reform, universal suffrage, and decreasing the status of the army. This also included the nationalization of three large tin companies that were owned by U.S. citizens. The government had the active support of local Communists, but the U.S. government did not intervene (though it hesitated several months before granting recognition), because Bolivia negotiated a compensation plan with the tin companies (and continued to sell tin to the United States) and also because it was concerned that interference could possibly lead to an even more radical government assuming power. Simply put, U.S. officials had come to the conclusion that although the MNR was not desirable, it was the least objectionable option. Over time, the U.S. government would successfully pressure the MNR to purge Communists from the government. Economic aid then flowed in.

Bolivia's president Víctor Paz Estenssoro (whose first time in office was 1952–1956) and his successor, Hernán Siles Zuazo (1956–1960), managed to pursue their own policies but at the same time accept conditions. For example, during the Siles administration, a Communist named Francisco Lluch was in the government, and the U.S. ambassador wrote back to Washington, "The Foreign Minister has stated that if the Embassy really feels that Lluch's presence is an embarrassment, that he can be removed. The Embassy has so indicated."¹² In the face of resistance, the U.S. response would be different.

The Invasion of Guatemala

The second and more stringent test would be Guatemala, where the outcome was not peaceful. Guatemala was among the poorest countries in the hemisphere and had long suffered dictatorial rule. In addition, in a country dominated by agriculture, the United Fruit Company was a fixture in the economy. It was the largest employer in the country with 10,000 employees, owned hundreds of thousands of acres (most of it uncultivated at any given moment), and also enjoyed a near monopoly on transportation. This, in turn, meant that United Fruit controlled the means by which all Guatemalan goods could reach the coasts or highways to be exported.

In 1944, a broad coalition (including junior officers in the military) forced the U.S.-supported dictator Jorge Ubico out of power, and elections were held the next year. In largely free and fair elections, Juan José Arévalo won with a reformist platform he called "spiritual socialism," which included a call to end foreign domination. His policies included wage increases and collective bargaining, public works (such as school and hospitals), efforts to reduce illiteracy (which at the time was 75 percent), disease control, and even a cautious move to expropriate and redistribute land. Taken as a whole, these initiatives constituted a threat to traditional elites.

These reforms brought Guatemala to the attention of the U.S. government, which began hearing complaints from investors and prominent

Guatemalans, who hired lobbyists to put pressure on U.S. policy makers. Not only were their own specific interests threatened, but ideology was central. Communists were very involved in the labor movement and formed a national Communist Party in 1949. Such developments did not go unnoticed within Guatemala (during Arévalo's five years in office, there were twenty-two military revolts), but Arévalo was careful not to push his reforms too quickly and, in particular, to encroach as little as possible on United Fruit. Nonetheless, the U.S. State Department issued numerous reports warning of Communist infiltration, including concern that in Arévalo's literacy program, "at the same time these backward Indians get their A.B.C.'s, they get a shot of communism."¹³ For the 1950 elections, the Communists supported the government's chosen candidate, Jacobo Arbenz, who leaned even more to the left. His words echoed dependency theory.

The U.S. reaction to Arbenz marked the demise of the Good Neighbor Policy. The strong contrast between U.S. and Latin American views of the situation are apparent through the words of two important figures of the time. President Arévalo published a book called *The Shark and the Sardines* in 1956, a harsh critique of U.S. policy. Asserting that the United States needed a war as an excuse to demand primary products at low prices, Arévalo wrote that out of the minds of Wall Street came "the mythical and scheming idea of the danger of war. Stalin the terrible: Russia, the ravenous."¹⁴ In this manner, the United States as shark could continue to devour the sardines to its south.

The view of prominent U.S. policy makers could not have been more different. George Kennan, an influential intellectual and former State Department official, traveled to Latin America and wrote a report on his observations. Beginning with the assertion "It seems to me unlikely that there could be any region of the earth in which nature and human behavior could have combined to produce a more unhappy and hopeless background for the conduct of human life than in Latin America," he went on to argue that, given the inability of Latin Americans to govern themselves effectively and protect themselves from Communism, "then we must concede that harsh governmental measures of repression may be the only answer."¹⁵

Within the U.S. government, Kennan's appraisal was not much disputed, and events outside the hemisphere gave it even more credence. In the late 1940s, the global struggle between Communism and capitalism began with stunning losses for the United States. The Soviet Union proved that it possessed nuclear weapons and consolidated its power over Eastern Europe, including a blockade of Berlin. The communist Mao Zedong defeated a friendly government in China, the most populous country on earth. Soviet-occupied North Korea became an independent Communist state. Guatemala, small and poor, thus took on a much more prominent position in U.S. policy. If the overall war against Communism was to be won, then every battle must be taken seriously.

Arbenz was a retired army colonel who had been minister of defense in the Arévalo administration. He promised further reforms and, by 1952, was embarking on an ambitious plan to restructure the entire economy. The centerpiece was the expropriation of unused land, especially the large tracts owned by United Fruit. Arbenz claimed that if the land was not being used, then it should belong to the nation. United Fruit countered with the argument that such land was necessary in case of natural disaster on other properties and also to preserve the soil.

In the U.S. State Department, an official named Louis Halle was called on in May 1954 to analyze the situation and justify U.S. action. Using the “Communism as disease” metaphor that was ubiquitous across the hemisphere, he wrote that the “Communist infection is not going to spread to the U.S. but if it should in the fullness of time spread over much of Latin America it would impair the military security of the Hemisphere and thus of the U.S.” An aggressive response was the only cure.

Box 5.3 Our Guatemala Policy (1954)

Major decisions affecting our Latin American policy are being made in an atmosphere of urgency generated by (a) the outbreak of a strike among United Fruit Company and Standard Fruit Company workers in Honduras, and (b) the delivery at a Guatemalan port of a cargo of arms from behind the Iron Curtain. ...

In Guatemala historic conditions provide substantial fuel to fire the revolution. Foreign ownership of the elements of Guatemala’s economic life, together with the pattern of its international trade, gives the Guatemalans a vivid and unwelcome sense of dependence on foreigners. ... Today the United Fruit is ... an agent of social betterment; but its past is not forgotten and what really counts is that, whether beneficent or maleficent in its practices, it remains the expression of Guatemala’s economic colonialism.

The international Communist movement is certainly not the cause of the social revolution in Guatemala, but it has made the same effort there that it has made everywhere else to harness the revolutionary impulses—nationalism and social reform alike—and exploit them for its own purposes. ... It has achieved a high degree of covert control over the reformist regime of President Arbenz and is dominant in the national labor movement. ...

More serious in its implications is the use that the international Communist movement might make (or be making) of Guatemala as a base from which to operate against the political and social structures of

other Latin American states, and from which to organize sabotage of physical installations that contribute to the defense of the Hemisphere. It is the projection of the Communist will from Guatemala across its borders that properly gives us the chief cause for concern.

The real and direct threat that Guatemala poses for her neighbors is that of political subversion through the kind of across-the-borders intrigue that is a normal feature of the Central American scene. The danger is of Communist contagion and is most immediate with respect to Guatemala's immediate neighbors. The Communist infection is not going to spread to the U.S. but if it should in the fullness of time spread over much of Latin America it would impair the military security of the Hemisphere and thus of the U.S.

The infection could spread by intrigue supplemented by the smuggling of arms. ... It could also spread through the example of independence of the U.S. that Guatemala might offer to nationalists throughout Latin America. It might spread through the example of nationalism and social reform. Finally and above all, it might spread through the disposition the Latin Americans would have to identify themselves with little Guatemala if the issue should be drawn for them (as it is being drawn for them) not as that of their own security but as a contest between David Guatemala and Uncle Sam Goliath. This latter, I think, is the danger we have most to fear and to guard against.

Source: United States Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954*, vol. 4 (American Republics), <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v04/d457>

The Eisenhower administration had already cut foreign aid and blocked Guatemalan attempts to purchase weapons and military supplies in Europe, so it listened sympathetically to United Fruit's complaints. Many members of the Eisenhower administration (including his Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and CIA Director Allen Dulles) had ties of one kind or another to the company. Irrespective of United Fruit's influence, however, there remained the issue of Communist infiltration and expansion. As the leader of Guatemala's Communist Party said, "They would have overthrown us even if we had grown no bananas."¹⁶ Unlike the Bolivian case, Arbenz refused to renounce his socialist goals or to assure the United States of Guatemala's willingness to accept U.S. demands.

With economic pressure already in place, the next step was a trip by Secretary of State Dulles to the tenth Inter-American Conference in Caracas, Venezuela, with the goal of promoting a multilateral solution to the problem. What he wanted was a resolution that would proclaim Communism as an

external threat to the hemisphere, which would allow for immediate action in Guatemala based on the Rio Treaty. He gave a speech saying Latin America was under attack “by the apparatus of international Communism, acting under orders from Moscow.”¹⁷ What he got instead was a much-diluted version that had no effect on the situation. Approved by a 17–1 vote (Guatemala voted against it; Argentina and Mexico abstained), it called only for future discussion regarding treaty obligations. There would be no Latin American support for intervention, as the delegates were more concerned about the United States than they were about the threat of Communism spreading outward from Guatemala.

Immediately after Arbenz’s election, there was debate between the CIA and the State Department about whether covert operations would be effective. State Department officials favored a “wait and see” approach, but when Arbenz’s reforms widened in 1952, covert action planning began. Although domestic opposition to Arbenz did exist—especially the army (despite his army origins, Arbenz failed to convince the institution as a whole), landowners, and the Catholic Church—it was not organized or united enough for the CIA’s taste. It was therefore necessary for the United States to finance, organize, and direct the operation. The planning also involved neighboring dictatorships in El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, which feared the spread of reformist movements.

The operation, called PBSUCCESS (PB was a CIA code name for Guatemala), was unlike anything the U.S. had done before in Latin America, employing techniques developed during World War II by what was then called the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). For example, psychological warfare was introduced long before armed intervention in order to make the invasion easier. This effort included spreading rumors about the ominous Communist designs of the Arbenz government (aimed both at peasants and the military) and then, in the last moments, warning of an impending large invasion. Radio broadcasts beamed anti-Arbenz rhetoric (although the CIA relied more heavily on word of mouth because few Guatemalans outside urban areas owned a radio). But it also reached a U.S. market. A 1954 NBC news documentary titled “Red Rule in Guatemala” emphasized to the U.S. public that Arbenz posed a threat to the Panama Canal, a message that readied the United States for the invasion itself.

In 1954, President Eisenhower had referred to countries as “dominoes,” such that if one country—no matter how far away from the United States—fell to Communism, then its neighbors would be next, like dominoes in a row that could lead straight through Mexico. Guatemala, just like Vietnam and Iran in the 1950s, was a potential domino that must be steadied before it had the chance to fall. This argument of connections between Communist countries appeared to be vindicated when a Swedish ship was discovered carrying Czechoslovakian weapons that Arbenz had purchased. In June 1954, the invasion began and would prove strikingly easy. Despite having only

approximately 250 troops, the CIA's chosen rebel leader, Col. Carlos Castillo Armas, had the advantage of U.S.-supplied planes and propaganda. Unnerved and already wavering, after several days of fighting the Guatemalan army turned against Arbenz and ordered him to resign. He complied and fled the country. (He died in Mexico in 1971.)

The overthrow of Jacobo Arbenz had enormous consequences. The return of dictatorship to Guatemala—even more repressive than before—soon plunged it into a civil war of apocalyptic proportions. The country, battered and torn, would not emerge from that war until 1996, and not until 200,000 Guatemalans, many of them indigenous and uninterested in the ideological battle, had been killed.

The effects of the invasion would also later bear directly on U.S.–Cuban relations and the politics of guerrilla warfare. For example, future guerrilla and revolutionary Ernesto “Che” Guevara was in Guatemala and saw first-hand the U.S. use of power. From that experience, he believed that Arbenz had made a serious mistake by allowing foreign investors and political opposition to remain unmolested in the country. Real reform, he felt, was possible only in a socialist revolution that excluded the old oligarchic elite and rejected the façade of “democracy” so heralded in the United States.

Finally, many within the U.S. government—especially the CIA and its director Allen Dulles—also felt they had learned a lesson from Guatemala. Domestic support for Arbenz had been disorganized and easy to overcome, and the CIA was convinced that this support was also minimal outside leftist political activists. Therefore, if another similar situation occurred, the same tactics could be successfully employed. Psychological warfare, for example, had proved highly successful. The Guatemalan military and much of the public had been influenced by the CIA's radio broadcasts.

As a member of the U.S. National Security Council argued in 1953, “We should regard Guatemala as a prototype area for testing means and methods of combating Communism.”¹⁸ A relatively small group of soldiers under the direction of the CIA could overthrow a government without an overt U.S. presence. The idea that there might be widespread support for reformist or even Communist governments was, they believed, pure propaganda. The Guatemalan case served as a model for the United States to follow in other countries, a testing ground of regime change. As political scientist Brian Loveman writes, it “became an over-glorified benchmark for future CIA adventures.”¹⁹

The long-term problems caused by the invasion are all the more ironic because just a few years prior, Secretary of State Dulles had written a book outlining his views of early Cold War policy, saying:

Also, in many Latin-American countries political control is more than ever in the hands of military groups. These groups have more power than ever because our Defense Department has built up military strength in some of the countries

on the theory that the Americas should be treated as military allies under the Act of Chapultepec and its successor, the Rio Pact. These trends away from representative government increase the opportunities of Communism.²⁰

He was right, but he did not follow his own advice.

Cuba after the Platt Amendment

While the CIA organized the Guatemalan invasion, Cubans watched in 1952 as Fulgencio Batista canceled elections and established dictatorial rule. Buoyed by U.S. support, Batista embodied everything that had gone wrong in Cuba. Organized crime flourished and lined the pockets of Cuban politicians and bureaucrats. Corruption was rampant, and the brief Cuban experience with democracy had withered away.

Furthermore, economic stagnation in the 1950s fueled discontent. Wages remained stable but prices rose alarmingly. As historian Louis Pérez writes, “Cubans participated in and depended largely on the U.S. economic system, in very much the same fashion as North Americans but without access to comparable U.S. social service and public assistance programs and at employment and wage levels substantially lower and prices higher than their North American counterparts.”²¹ The Cuban middle class was becoming frustrated as it lost economic ground.

One such member of the middle class was Fidel Castro. He became famous for a 1953 attack on the Moncada army barracks, for which he was imprisoned. His popularity—bolstered considerably by his personal charisma and energy—grew, and after being released in a general amnesty (intended by Batista to demonstrate his fairness and democratic principles) he went to Mexico to plan a revolution through guerrilla war. The amnesty was disastrous for Batista because it freed the man who would overthrow him, and in Mexico, Castro would meet Che Guevara. Leading a small group, they launched their guerrilla war in 1956, sailing to Cuba (on a boat named *Granma*, which after the revolution became the name of Cuba’s state newspaper) and only narrowly avoiding annihilation.

Although Guevara and many of Castro’s other acquaintances were either Communists or sympathetic to Communist goals, Castro himself advocated radical reforms but not yet full-fledged socialism. He denied that his intentions were anything but democratic and was very careful to preserve a clean image as a champion of the poor and not as a Communist revolutionary. *New York Times* reporter Herbert Matthews traveled into the Cuban mountains to interview him, and the subsequent press accounts were highly flattering. Castro emphasized the domestic nature of his mission: “Above all ... we are fighting for a democratic Cuba and an end to the dictatorship.”²²

The U.S. government had been perfectly willing to support Batista as long as he managed to keep order on the island, but toward the end of the 1950s, it was obvious that he no longer could. The Eisenhower administration decided that Batista, whose political support had dwindled to dangerously low levels, had to go so that a new leader could restore confidence and take the steam out of Fidel Castro's movement. To that end, the United States enacted a trade embargo against Batista in 1958, and several months later the U.S. ambassador was recalled. The symbolic effect was perhaps the most devastating: by its actions the United States had announced that it no longer supported the dictator, so his days were numbered. Later Batista would lament the "technique of the big lie" used against him, claiming that all charges of despotism and underdevelopment were false. According to him, a completely false image of Cuba "was achieved by repetition, by the planned utilization of the gullible, the ignorant, the naïve, the unscrupulous, the perennial sympathizers with leftwing causes, the thwarted, the psychic and physical cripples, the men of resentment."²³ But by 1959, few outside Batista's small circle of loyalists believed his rhetoric any more.

The Nixon Trip and Its Consequences

Reformist movements, heavily infused with resentment toward the United States, were evident throughout the region. Vice President Richard Nixon discovered that firsthand in 1958, when he undertook a quick "goodwill" trip to Latin America. The popular response in the streets was often negative and became violent when he reached Caracas, to the point that his car was attacked. Venezuelans had recently ousted a U.S.-supported dictator, Marcos Pérez Jimenez, and Nixon treated the interim government with "deliberate coolness" because "They had welcomed Communist support in the revolution against Pérez Jimenez and now they did not know how to handle their Communist allies in the government."²⁴

The attacks were an outrage to the U.S. government, which launched a variety of investigations and analyses. In Congress, the State Department, and the White House, the conclusions varied little from Halle's analysis in 1954. There was consensus that domestic, grassroots reformist movements existed and were viewed as legitimate by the general population but that inevitably they were infiltrated and controlled by Communists, which in turn were receiving orders directly from Moscow. Such movements, therefore, had to be watched very carefully and required a rapid response if the threat of Communist takeover appeared imminent.

After Nixon's trip, Brazilian President Juscelino Kubitschek wrote to Eisenhower to ask that U.S.-Latin American economic relations be rethought completely. He advocated an "Operation Pan America" involving an influx of U.S. capital along the lines of the Marshall Plan in Europe. U.S. policy

makers were opposed to a project on that scale, but the OAS began discussions about economic cooperation, and soon Eisenhower would announce U.S. support for new economic institutions.

Nonetheless, there was still considerable wariness about the expansion of Communism. President Eisenhower's own brother reinforced previous conclusions. Milton Eisenhower became a sort of roaming advisor, traveling throughout Latin America and offering his opinions. He argued that democratic reformists should be applauded, but that Communists were "using tried techniques of subversion and economic influence in an atmosphere of poverty, misery, and social turbulence that is ideal for the breeding of violent revolutions."²⁵ There was therefore always the danger that any movement would be infiltrated. His reports, however, also demonstrated the growing consensus that Communism fed off poverty and consequently only economic growth could be a bulwark against Communist aggression. That idea would not reach fruition until President John F. Kennedy took office.

The Political Economy of the Early Cold War

From the end of World War II until the rise to power of Fidel Castro in 1959, Latin America remained a center for U.S. investment but not for foreign aid. The fiscally conservative Eisenhower administration did disburse aid to developing countries throughout the world, but the majority went to areas considered more susceptible to Communist influence. As usual, the primary attention of U.S. policy makers was elsewhere, such as Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. From the U.S. strategic point of view, Latin America mattered far less.

So instead of aid, there came only admonitions. In 1953, Latin Americans were told that their best strategy was to follow free market principles and to attract private foreign investment to supply the necessary capital. In developing countries, this advice usually fell on deaf ears. The United States itself, in fact, had not followed free market principles as it developed early in the nineteenth century, which was not lost in the minds of Latin American leaders. These leaders were openly disappointed that, despite their nearly unanimous unity against the Axis powers and protection of U.S. access to their natural resources, their concerns were not considered.

The shock of Richard Nixon's reception in Venezuela had a moderate effect on economic policy that would be a precursor to a much more ambitious program—the Alliance for Progress—during the Kennedy administration. Nixon himself claimed to advocate increasing economic aid, though he did not appear to push too hard to find support for the idea, which did not materialize.

The idea of a regional development bank had been around for several decades but had never gone beyond the conceptual stage. In 1959, the

Eisenhower administration announced its support for the creation of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB). It came into being the following year, and the United States provided \$500 million for development projects in the region. The IADB's purpose was to loan money to public institutions for specific projects, especially those related to infrastructure, such as housing, electricity, road building, and education. By the twenty-first century, it would have capital exceeding \$100 billion.

The IADB was, from the outset, funded in large part by the United States and often viewed in Latin America as yet another instrument of U.S. policy. Even earlier, another organization had been created, inspired entirely by Latin America. The Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), founded in 1948, was part of the United Nations and therefore not dependent on the United States. It would later include the Caribbean and in Latin America would be more widely known by its Spanish acronym, CEPAL.

The founding principles of CEPAL revolved around an early version of dependency theory.²⁶ Its first director, the Argentine Raúl Prebisch, argued that Latin America suffered as a result of its place in the global economy. More specifically, its countries exported primary products (such as agricultural goods), the prices of which did not rise significantly (or often fell) as they imported manufactured goods from the wealthier countries, paying increasingly higher prices for them. This should sound familiar, because it is the conceptual foundation of dependency theory. In addition, a surplus of Latin American labor kept wages low. Given those realities, it was impossible for Latin American countries to improve their economic situations without significant change. Unemployment and economic stagnation were in part a function of Latin America's place in the international division of labor. To make matters worse, according to CEPAL, U.S. investment was not even having a positive economic effect because it ended up taking more wealth out of the region than it contributed. On account of its criticisms of the United States, the Truman administration tried unsuccessfully to have CEPAL disbanded.

Prebisch's proposed solution to this dilemma was industrialization, but his vision included a prominent role for the state instead of the primacy of a free market system. During World War II, many Latin American countries had begun a process called import substitution industrialization (ISI), which fit well in CEPAL's model of economic development. The idea was that to reduce dependency on imports, the state would direct, encourage, and subsidize targeted domestic industries, whose products would substitute for foreign goods.

As this Latin America-based model developed, however, it relied more on foreign direct investment than on public money, such that dependence on foreign (especially U.S.) capital remained, which contributed to debt. In many countries, it also tended to deepen the relationship between U.S. investors and policy makers, Latin American economic elites, and Latin American

militaries. If foreign investors were to feel secure about putting their money in a country, then the state—through the military and police—needed to ensure that labor militancy was kept to a minimum. Repression of labor was therefore an unintended consequence. At the very least, however, CEPAL's vision represented a counter to the hegemonic economic policies of the United States.

Summary and Conclusion

During World War II, U.S. security interests represented the primary motivating factors for U.S. policy, and would intensify when the Cold War began soon after the war's end. Within Latin America, the predominance of security over all else bred dissatisfaction. While the United States rebuilt and/or poured aid into other parts of the world, Latin America received relatively little. At the same time, the high ideals of the Good Neighbor Policy were rapidly disappearing, and after the 1954 invasion of Guatemala, U.S. policy makers could not credibly claim to reject armed intervention. Power was once again central. This is consistent with realist theory.

In part to counter (in realist terms, to balance) U.S. influence, Latin America supported the creation of hemispheric pacts and organizations such as the Rio Treaty, the Organization of American States, and the Economic Commission for Latin America. On the streets of Latin America, protests and riots marked a swell of resentment against poverty and U.S. domination of economies in the region. In Cuba, however, another response to U.S. influence was brewing under the direction of Fidel Castro, as he led a ragtag but growing (and determined) revolutionary army in the Cuban mountains with the intent of overthrowing a corrupt dictator who owed his continued existence to U.S. support. Revolutionary fervor with a distinctly anti-U.S. bent was developing during the early Cold War, though it would not fully flower until after Castro and the Cuban revolution triumphed.

Especially during the Eisenhower administration, the United States became more openly supportive of dictatorships and authoritarian governance in order to fight against Communist infiltration. For all his grandfatherly countenance, Eisenhower followed realist principles. The era of goodwill under Roosevelt collapsed under the weight of ideological struggle. Reformist movements in Latin America faced an uphill battle because not only did they threaten business interests, but also U.S. policy makers assumed that they were too weak to resist Communist domination and therefore targeted them as threats to national security. In a book based on his travels to Latin America in the 1950s, Milton Eisenhower correctly noted that "Our present declarations of honorable intentions as we seek to help Latin Americans achieve a better life are often obscured in their minds by the grim echoes of history."²⁷

The divergence between the interests and concerns of the masses in Latin America and U.S. policy could not have been more striking. Demands for land reform, higher wages, better working conditions, expanded political rights, and the nationalization of prominent agricultural or extractive industries collided violently with the traditional and entrenched interests of the U.S. government and investors. Fidel Castro's revolution in Cuba was a stark reminder of that divergence. Chapter 6 addresses how the United States and groups within Latin America dealt with that divergence of interests and how the struggle against a hegemonic power engulfed the entire region.

Research Questions

1. Compare the expropriation of land in Guatemala under Arbenz to expropriations in other countries during the same period (such as Bolivia and Mexico). Why did the United States respond to them in different ways?
2. What lessons did the CIA learn from the Guatemalan invasion? In what ways did errors in those lessons later contribute to the Bay of Pigs disaster in Cuba?
3. What were the main contrasts between the views of the U.S. government and Latin Americans regarding strategies for economic development? What differences of opinion existed within Latin America as well?
4. How significant was the threat of Soviet domination in Latin America before the Cuban revolution? To what degree (if at all) did U.S. policy makers misjudge Soviet strength and political goals in the region?
5. Given that the United States deemed security an essential factor in its policy toward Latin America during World War II, what were the causes of the drastic shift in policy after the war that served to dismantle the Good Neighbor Policy?

Notes

- 1 Quoted in Gil 1971, 169.
- 2 Quoted in Schoultz 1998, 314.
- 3 Nunn 1992.
- 4 Schoultz 1998, 329.
- 5 Schoultz 1998, 329–330.
- 6 Acheson 1969, 257–258.
- 7 Quoted in Rabe 1988, 27.
- 8 Gilderhus 2000, 138.
- 9 Quoted in Rabe 1988, 108.

- 10 LaFeber 1984, 91.
- 11 Thorp 1998, 349.
- 12 Quoted in Wood 1985, 149.
- 13 Quoted in Schoultz 1998, 339.
- 14 Arévalo 1980, 147.
- 15 Quoted in LaRosa and Mora 1999, 178; 182.
- 16 Quoted in Gleijeses 1991, 7.
- 17 Quoted in Kinzer 2013, 166.
- 18 Quoted in Cullather 1999, 35.
- 19 Loveman 2010, 282.
- 20 Dulles 1950, 151.
- 21 Pérez 1990, 230.
- 22 Quoted in DePalma 2006, 87.
- 23 Batista 1964, xi.
- 24 Nixon 1962, 222.
- 25 Eisenhower 1963, 316.
- 26 Klarén 1986.
- 27 Eisenhower 1963, 167.

Further Sources

Books

- Gleijeses, Piero. *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944–1954* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991). Based on a close analysis of archival documents, this classic work details the political, economic, and ideological factors that led to the Guatemalan invasion.
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- Sadlier, Darlene J. *Americans All: Good Neighbor Cultural Diplomacy in World War II* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2012). A deeply researched book demonstrating how the United States government worked to export U.S. culture to Latin America as a way to generate feelings of unity.
- Schlesinger, Stephen, and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999). A well-written analysis of the factors that eventually led to the U.S.-initiated coup against Jacobo Arbenz in 1954. Its thesis is that the expropriation of United Fruit property was the primary reason the U.S. government reacted to Arbenz so strongly.
- Wood, Bryce. *The Dismantling of the Good Neighbor Policy* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1985). The sequel to Wood's book on the creation of the Good Neighbor Policy, this book describes how the administrations after Roosevelt began to utilize other strategies as the Cold War progressed, which would result in the disintegration of the policy itself. It pays particular attention to the cases of Argentina, Bolivia, and Guatemala.

Websites

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, or CEPAL in Spanish). This official website has an extensive collection of documents and economic reports, including the social aspects of development, international insertion, macroeconomics, economic governance, the environment and development, and productive and managerial development. There is also a free email subscription for a monthly publication called *Cepal News*. <http://www.eclac.cl>

Inter-American Development Bank. The official website of the bank, which includes a great deal of information on investment, economic policies, reports on specific countries, status reports on development projects, and a wide array of related topics. It is a useful source for studying either individual countries or the region as a whole. <http://www.iadb.org/>

The National Security Archive, Guatemala Documentation Project. The National Security Archive has links to previously classified U.S. government documents related to the 1954 invasion, as well as the civil war that began not long afterward. It includes instructions on assassination and lists of those targeted for murder. <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/guatemala/>

Organization of American States. This is the official website of the OAS, which has a large number of documents, publications, and general information on its activities and its organizational structure. <http://www.oas.org>

The Cuban Revolution

Timeline

- 1959** Cuban revolution succeeds
- 1960** Cuba signs trade deals with USSR; United States begins trade embargo
- 1961** United States cuts diplomatic relations with Cuba (January); Alliance for Progress announced (March); Bay of Pigs invasion (April 17); Castro declares the revolution is socialist
- 1962** Cuban missile crisis; Hickenlooper Amendment
- 1963** President John F. Kennedy assassinated
- 1964** Mann Doctrine outlined; United States supports overthrow of Goulart in Brazil
- 1965** Invasion of Dominican Republic
- 1966** “Tricontinental” meetings

After New Year’s Day 1959, U.S.–Latin American relations experienced a drastic shift when Fulgencio Batista fled Cuba and the revolution triumphed. During the 1950s, there had already been a clash between Latin American reformist movements and a U.S. policy based largely on security. In addition, although fear of Communist advances had already begun to color the attitudes of U.S. policy makers and many Latin American economic and political elites, the Cuban revolution intensified that factor and brought it to the forefront. In the eyes of U.S. policy makers, the mere existence of a socialist Cuba put into jeopardy the very stability of the hemisphere; it posed

a direct challenge to U.S. hegemony, and its destruction became an obsession that remains alive and well today.

From a realist perspective, U.S.–Cuban relations boil down to power politics. In an international system characterized by anarchy, countries with competing ideologies will use whatever means possible to pursue their own interests. For the United States, this meant trying to assassinate, overthrow, and isolate the regime of Fidel Castro. Cuba, meanwhile, would seek to spread revolution not only across Latin America but also to the rest of the world, attacking governments friendly to the United States as a way to balance power.

Yet dependency theory also has something useful to say about the relationship or, to be more specific, the rupture of the relationship. The revolution severed ties of economic dependency on the United States, thus fulfilling the aspirations of more radical dependency theorists by breaking free of the chains imposed by the core. Although Cuba would ultimately become heavily dependent on the Soviet Union, it accomplished something unique. Through determination and sacrifice, the revolutionary government of Fidel Castro survived despite all the efforts of the United States to destroy it. In their classic work on dependency, Cardoso and Faletto discuss the conditions of dependency and conclude, “The important question, then, is how to construct paths toward socialism.”¹

It is very difficult, if not downright impossible, to overstate the importance of the Cuban revolution for U.S.–Latin American relations. The relationship between the two countries, dominated by the United States for sixty years, would be turned on its head. The revolution, with its strong anti-U.S. overtones, was a rallying cry for many in the region who desired to shed what they believed was an economic and political chokehold by the United States. Even at the beginning of the twenty-first century, courting anti-Castro Cuban Americans is an important campaign issue for every presidential candidate in the United States.

The revolution riveted the Eisenhower administration’s attention because it suddenly seemed possible that the United States could lose the Cold War in Latin America. For the first time since 1898, the U.S. government had no control over Cuban political developments. Castro himself usually avoided mentioning the United States in his initial speeches and was cagey, even humorous, when asked directly about his northern neighbor. When told that the United States might withdraw its military mission in Cuba, Castro said he was not sure what purpose it served anyway; had it taught Batista how to lose a war?² He used nationalist rhetoric to boost support for his reforms, but did not yet use these reforms as an opportunity to lambaste the United States.

The Development of the Cuban Revolution

Fidel Castro was unpredictable and initially was hard to pinpoint ideologically. Although he had claimed not to be a Communist, his tendencies were clearly leftist and radical. In April 1959, he even traveled to the United States,

invited by a conference of newspaper editors, and met with Vice President Richard Nixon. (President Eisenhower refused to see him.) Nixon's appraisal was that Castro was "either incredibly naïve about Communism or under Communist discipline—my guess is the former."³

On his return, Castro soon enacted reforms that were wildly popular with much of his domestic audience, including deep cuts in monthly rents, wage increases, unemployment insurance, health and education reforms, reduction of telephone and electricity rates, renegotiation of labor contracts, and nationalization of large landholdings. Not all Cubans, nevertheless, felt like celebrating, especially as Castro became more autocratic. Large public trials and subsequent executions revealed what could happen to "counterrevolutionaries," however defined. Repression became more widespread. Many middle-class Cubans felt threatened and began leaving for the United States, especially Florida and more specifically Miami.

Through 1959, U.S. officials and businesses watched as nationalizations occurred and members of the Cuban Communist Party took a greater number of government positions, displacing moderates who had initially supported the revolution but were growing disillusioned with Castro's centralization of power. By the middle of the year, there was already talk within the U.S. government of cutting the sugar quota as a means of economic retaliation. In September 1960, Castro defied the United States in a speech at the United Nations in which he denounced U.S. imperialism. The issue of sugar became moot in early 1960, when the first Soviet trade delegation arrived in Havana and soon reached an agreement to guarantee sugar purchases and lend money to the Castro government.

The Cuban revolution was a welcome surprise to Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev. The Moscow-affiliated Cuban Communist party had argued against struggle in the countryside, and only near the end did it join Fidel Castro's rebellion. For the Soviet Union, Cuba could not have been a better placed ally. Ninety miles from Florida, in the very heart of a geographical area long controlled by the United States, Cuba was a strategic pearl. Khrushchev poured aid Castro's way, which would soon have the effect of shifting Cuba's economic dependence from the United States to the Soviet Union.

For the Eisenhower administration, these new ties to the USSR represented proof that Castro was Communist. Policy decisions were based on unease about the designs of the Soviet Union on the Western Hemisphere. Just as in 1898, Cuba itself was almost peripheral to the debate. Within a month of the arrival of the Soviet officials, Eisenhower signed an order for the CIA to begin planning for Castro's ouster. Using lessons it learned from Guatemala in 1954, the CIA recruited Cuban exiles and began training them (ironically, in Guatemala) and making preparations for the psychological warfare that would accompany an eventual invasion of the island. The precise timetable and strategies were not yet defined.



Figure 6.1 Fidel Castro and Nikita Khrushchev make their way through crowd, cementing their new alliance. World Telegram & Sun photo by Herman Hiller. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, New York World-Telegram and the Sun Newspaper Photograph Collection. LC-USZ62-127233.

Another aspect of the deals that Cuba made with the Soviet Union involved subsidized oil. When crude oil began arriving in 1960, President Eisenhower ordered U.S. oil companies not to refine it. In response, Castro nationalized the refineries and then every other remaining U.S.-owned business. The U.S. Congress also voted to cut the Cuban sugar quota drastically. Later in 1960, Eisenhower would take economic sanctions to a new level by imposing a trade embargo, which has never been lifted (though in late 2014 President Barack Obama announced major changes to U.S. policy, which will be discussed in later chapters). Its purpose was to strangle Cuba economically to the point at which Castro would be unable to maintain popularity and at which the Cuban people, tired of deprivation, would overthrow Castro. As one U.S. member of Congress said at the time, “If Cuba’s splendid people understand that they must sell their sugar or their economy will be destroyed, they will themselves find a way to deal with the present misleaders and fomenters of hatred.”⁴ For more than fifty years, U.S. presidents would employ similar strategies and

language to justify continuing the embargo. Economic sanctions and similar measures such as travel restrictions are always supposedly on the brink of succeeding. By the 1990s, the United States opened up to China and Vietnam, arguing that an injection of capitalism would erode Communism from within—and, in fact, both countries became more capitalist, if not much more democratic—but with Cuba the ironclad rule of isolation held for a long time.

To further codify these policies, in 1962 the U.S. Congress passed a bill with an amendment by Iowa Senator Bourke Hickenlooper. The Hickenlooper Amendment cut off all assistance to any country that nationalized property owned by U.S. citizens or imposed taxes or conditions deemed discriminatory enough to have the effect of seizing control of that property. The law was intended to compel any administration to act immediately if Castro-style socialism took hold anywhere in the world.

Box 6.1 The Hickenlooper Amendment (1962)

The President shall suspend assistance to the government of any country to which assistance is provided under this Act when the government of such country or any governmental agency or subdivision within such country on or after January 1, 1962—

1. has nationalized or expropriated or seized ownership or control of property owned by any United States citizen or by any corporation, partnership, or association not less than 50 per centum beneficially owned by United States citizens, or
2. has imposed or enforced discriminatory taxes or other exactions, or restrictive maintenance or operational conditions, which have the effect of nationalizing, expropriating, or otherwise seizing ownership or control of property so owned, and such country, government agency or government subdivision fails within a reasonable time (not more than six months after such action or after the date of enactment of this subsection, which is later) to take appropriate steps, which may include arbitration, to discharge its obligations under international law toward such citizen or entity, including equitable and speedy compensation for such property in convertible foreign exchange, as required by international law, or fails to take steps designed to provide relief from such taxes, exactions, or conditions, as the case may be, and such suspension shall continue until he is satisfied that appropriate steps are being taken.

Source: *United States Statutes at Large*, vol. 76 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1963): 260–261.

Latin American View: The OAS

The Organization of American States also reacted to these revolutionary developments, although the United States still was not viewing the organization as very relevant in terms of contributing to security, and it had yet to provide much counterbalance to U.S. hegemony. Nonetheless, in line with liberal institutional theory there was a nascent push from Latin America to establish its own view of the global conflict. There was considerable concern about Communism, but it was often not exactly in line with U.S. interests.

In August 1960, the OAS approved the Declaration of San José, which proclaimed that intervention from outside the hemisphere—meaning Soviet Communism—represented a security threat. In a reaffirmation of the Monroe Doctrine, the declaration resolved “the acceptance of a threat of extra-continental intervention by any American state endangers American solidarity and security, and that this obliges the Organization of American States to disapprove it and reject it with equal vigor.”⁵ The vote was approved 19–0; the Dominican Republic did not attend, and Cuba withdrew before the voting took place.

Many Latin American delegates, however, were hesitant to be party to U.S. aggression toward Cuba in a situation they generally did not view as a hemispheric threat. Mexico, in fact, added its own statement reaffirming the inviolability of sovereignty, stating that “in no way is it a condemnation or a threat against Cuba, whose aspirations for economic improvement and social justice have the fullest support of the Government and the people of Mexico.”⁶ Castro called the OAS a tool of U.S. imperialism and later that year announced his support for Soviet foreign policy and its efforts to provide assistance to developing countries. Eisenhower’s last measure, taken just before he left office in 1961, was to break off diplomatic relations. The battle for Cuba was in full swing, and the perceived stakes were high. According to U.S. officials, it was nothing less than the protection of civilization itself.

President John F. Kennedy and Cuba

The sense in the United States that Cuba was a test case for the civilized world stemmed in part from the rhetoric of the 1960 presidential elections in the United States. Senator John F. Kennedy and Vice President Richard Nixon each tried to outdo the other in assuring the U.S. public that their anti-Communist credentials were better than the other candidate’s. Kennedy accused the Eisenhower administration (and by extension Nixon) of “losing” Cuba to Communism and, unaware of covert plans already underway, criticized it for not doing more to get Cuba back into the U.S. orbit. For his part, Nixon emphasized Kennedy’s inexperience.

Kennedy barely won the election and came to office needing not only to prove himself in foreign policy, but also to demonstrate his anti-Communist

credentials. During a presidential debate with Nixon, he had said, “The big struggle will be to prevent the influence of Castro spreading to other countries—Mexico, Panama, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia.”⁷ By making Castro a prominent campaign issue, Kennedy felt he had no choice but to act tough on Communism. Cuba had been “lost” and it needed to be regained.

Khrushchev represented the other side of the same coin. He felt the Soviet Union had to make sure it did not lose Cuba:

[O]ne thought kept hammering away at my brain: what will happen if we lose Cuba? I knew it would have been a terrible blow to Marxism-Leninism. It would gravely diminish our stature throughout the world, but especially in Latin America.⁸

Both superpowers found themselves locked into a struggle in which they believed they must engage because failing would damage their credibility or even their national security.

The Alliance for Progress

In 1960, Eisenhower provided \$500 million in loans, the so-called Social Progress Trust Fund, to be used for improving social conditions in Latin America. Belatedly, his administration had come to the conclusion that anti-U.S. sentiment and support for Communist movements were in part fueled by terrible living conditions, misery, and hopelessness. But Eisenhower’s commitment to expenditures for economic development had always been half-hearted and did not amount to a coherent, large-scale program. In March 1961, Kennedy announced that the 1960s would be a “decade of development,” and to that end, he laid plans for the Alliance for Progress. The program’s goals would be to provide “homes, work and land, health and schools” and generally reduce poverty. The United States put in an initial \$500 million, and during the 1960s, the total amount from all sources reached \$18 billion. Kennedy speechwriter Richard Goodwin (who became Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs) wrote later that he saw the Spanish word “alianza” and thought it sounded good, then decided to add “progress,” which sealed the name.⁹

Later in 1961, delegates from around the hemisphere met at Punta del Este, a beach town in Uruguay, to determine the nature and scope of the Alliance’s activities. On paper it was vast, with the goals of promoting democracy, socioeconomic development, education, fair wages and working conditions, health care, tax reform, reduced inflation, and private enterprise. A combination of U.S. funding and Latin American efforts would bring the region closer to those goals. The OAS, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America all

worked together to put programs into place. The U.S. delegation promised \$1 billion the first year and \$20 billion over the decade from all international sources. Che Guevara, who had come as Cuba's delegate, challenged the U.S. commitment to reform and dismissed the Alliance as economic imperialism.

The Alliance's founding principle was that poverty spawned Communism, and therefore one way to combat Communism was to eliminate, or at least reduce, that source of support. It was based on "modernization theory," which emerged from political science and economics and held that nations went through phases of development as they made their way from "traditional" to "modern." Becoming "modern" (which, in the eyes of modernization theorists, meant copying U.S. institutions) would lead to economic growth and democracy, while traditional societies remained mired in dictatorship and "backwardness." The argument went that the more the United States offered itself as a model and provided aid as a starting point, the more Latin America could become modern and therefore more immune to the siren song of Communism. Such a U.S.-centric vision, however, was perhaps doomed before it could even start; like the Alliance for Progress itself, it did not fully address Latin American realities.

A number of organizations grew out of the Alliance for Progress, such as the Agency for International Development (which helped to administer funds) and the Peace Corps, which sent idealistic young U.S. citizens to remote parts of Latin America, as well as the rest of the world, to act as teachers and builders. Capitalism could thus offer a viable alternative to people who might otherwise view socialist revolution as their only solution.

Throughout the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, billions of dollars of public and private investment flowed into Latin America, but the scale of poverty was so immense that the Alliance's founders could never hope to achieve their goals. However, a host of other problems were associated with the Alliance. One serious issue was that the Alliance contained within it a contradiction because it included the promise of reform to a region largely dominated by oligarchs. The United States did not wish to alienate these large landowners, and so the promise of substantive change could not be fulfilled. Another problem was the unilateral nature of the development projects, which, no matter how well intentioned, were often not well suited to local customs and conditions. In addition, neither the U.S. nor the Latin American governments were able to generate much enthusiasm in their populations for the programs. Many in the U.S. government, including Vice President Lyndon Johnson, viewed the Alliance with skepticism.

Despite the surge of public and private capital into Latin America, over the course of the 1960s the Alliance failed to achieve its objectives. The balance of trade worsened; from 1960 to 1968, U.S. exports to Latin America increased from \$3.8 billion to \$5.3 billion, and U.S. imports of Latin American goods rose only from \$4 billion to \$5.2 billion.¹⁰ The debt burden also increased, which meant that a higher percentage of export earnings

disappeared immediately to service it. The Alliance for Progress did not stimulate economic growth or alleviate the crushing weight of unemployment and poverty.

Furthermore, this emphasis on development did not mean that the United States had eschewed more traditional means of pursuing foreign policy. The policy response to events in Cuba revealed that pure power calculations and the use of force were still prominent foreign policy tools. Realist theory would not consider development projects as an essential element in foreign policy, and clearly many U.S. policy makers did not either.

The Struggle to Maintain Hegemony: 1960–1962

The Cuban revolution was a pivotal moment for U.S.–Latin American relations. Never before had a country—not to mention such a small, dependent one—managed to challenge U.S. hegemony so stridently and serve as a balance to U.S. power. During the end of the Eisenhower administration and the beginning of the Kennedy administration, U.S. policy makers worked to devise ways to undercut Fidel Castro and his revolution.

Bay of Pigs

After his election in 1960, President-elect Kennedy learned of the CIA operation to overthrow Fidel Castro. The CIA had assembled a group of Cuban exiles who were training in Guatemala (moving later to Nicaragua) to invade the island. Kennedy had misgivings about the entire plan but was boxed in. If he scuttled it, for example, the exiles would become angry, blow the cover of the secret plans, humiliate Kennedy, and leave him wide open to Republican critics who would label him as weak.

Instead, Kennedy chose to allow the operation to develop but not to give it his full support. Although the CIA was still enthusiastic, many skeptics within the administration questioned some of the main assumptions of the invasion plan. The CIA believed that a majority of Cubans opposed Castro and would join a rebellion if the initial landing were successful, an assumption that rested further on the premise that the revolution had been Moscow inspired instead of homegrown. In addition, despite the size of Castro's military (estimated at 225,000), the plotters were certain that once they reached Cuba's shores, they could overwhelm whatever force was present.

The plan had originally conceived the city of Trinidad to be the landing location, but Kennedy rejected it as too prominent. The CIA suggested a new area, the Bahía de Cochinos, or Bay of Pigs. Without adequate checks regarding suitability, the final approval was made to launch the attack in an entirely inappropriate area, marked by shallow, rocky water and swamp. Poor planning,

along with Kennedy's refusal to allow U.S. military assistance—though the CIA and the exiles themselves believed erroneously that, if push came to shove, Kennedy would come to their aid with air strikes—doomed the invasion force of about 1,400, which landed in April 1961. Boats ran aground, and the terrain was so treacherous that they were easy targets for the Cuban army, which had been on alert for some time as a result of the many rumors coming out of Central America about Cuban exiles who had come to train. Those who survived were captured, and later Castro traded them to the United States for money and supplies, subsequently showing off his shiny new tractors.

The U.S. government's participation in the affair was immediately obvious, and it was a public relations disaster for Kennedy. In a speech a month later, he acknowledged the U.S. role and framed the attempted invasion in terms of the global struggle against Communism: "The message of Cuba, of Laos, of the rising din of Communist voices in Asia and Latin America—these messages are all the same. The complacent, the self-indulgent, the soft societies are about to be swept away with the debris of history."¹¹

The CIA, meanwhile, studied its own obvious failures, a review that was not declassified until the 1990s (and parts remain classified). It came to the conclusion that the CIA had no evidence that an internal opposition would rise up against Castro, that plausible deniability of being tied to the invasion was "a pathetic illusion," and even that CIA agents treated their Cuban counterparts "like dirt."¹² That appraisal sounded amazingly like the treatment Cubans received during the Spanish-American War. Ever since independence, U.S. policy makers, diplomats, and soldiers had viewed Latin Americans as inferior. The report asserted that the CIA "was not likely to win many people away from Communism if the Americans treat other nationals with condescension or contempt ... [or] as incompetent children whom the Americans are going to rescue for reasons of their own."¹³

Castro, on the other hand, emerged a hero and as a result was able to consolidate his hold on the country even further; in the aftermath, he arrested up to 100,000 people. He had stood firm against the United States, thus achieving a rare feat—especially for a small country—in the history of U.S.–Latin American relations. At that point, Castro announced what by then everyone knew, namely, that his revolution was Marxist-Leninist. Pro-Castro demonstrations appeared throughout the region. The invasion also provided undeniable proof that Castro was right when he claimed that the United States was trying to undermine his government. It would also lead to the Soviet decision to send nuclear missiles to Cuba.

Power Politics: The Cuban Missile Crisis

During the summer of 1962, the U.S. government was aware that the Soviet Union was transporting weapons and even troops to Cuba, ostensibly to serve as a deterrent to a U.S. attack. The Soviets repeatedly assured the Kennedy

administration that all such weapons were strictly defensive, and in turn they received warnings that no offensive armaments would be tolerated. The administration debated the possibility that nuclear weapons might be included, but to most advisors it seemed far-fetched that Nikita Khrushchev, knowing how the United States would probably react, would risk war. Yet he had.

On October 16, President Kennedy was informed that photos had been taken proving the existence of Soviet ballistic missiles. From White House tapes, Kennedy can be heard wondering in vain why Khrushchev had done so. At least four times, he comes only to the conclusion that “it’s a goddamn mystery to me.”¹⁴ Analyses suggest that although Khrushchev valued the missiles from a strategic perspective, he was intent on protecting Cuba and its socialist experiment from U.S. invasion. In 1960, he met Castro in the United States for a meeting of the UN General Assembly, and he “came away emotionally committed to the new Cuban regime and its youthful, powerful leaders.”¹⁵ What followed were thirteen of the most dangerous days of the Cold War.

Although Cuba was the physical location of the crisis, the true focal point was not Latin America. The view of the Kennedy administration was that the entire “free world” was at stake, but individual cabinet members and advisors disagreed intensely about the best course of action. Knowing that the



Figure 6.2 In the wake of escalating tensions, President Kennedy addresses the nation on the Soviet missile presence in Cuba, 22 October 1962. Photo: Cecil W. Stoughton. JFK Library, Accession Number: ST-A44-10-62.

outbreak of nuclear war was entirely possible, Kennedy ordered U.S. ships to patrol around Cuba to be certain that no more missiles could arrive. He went on national television to explain the situation, which had the effect of putting public pressure on the Soviets to withdraw the missiles. The tension escalated further when a U.S. U-2 spy plane was shot down over Cuba.

Using both public and private channels, Kennedy and Khrushchev entered into delicate and difficult negotiations. Finally, the Soviet leader capitulated. He would remove the missiles if the United States accepted two conditions: First, it would pledge not to invade Cuba. Second, it would remove missiles it currently had in Turkey. Kennedy agreed, especially because he had already planned to remove the missiles, though he refused to make the second part of the agreement public. With that, the Cuban missile crisis concluded.

From Fidel Castro's perspective, the affair was a disaster. He was never consulted and had no say in the agreement. Instead, even as the agreement was broadcast on radio he received a letter from Khrushchev telling him not to get carried away and provoke the United States. Angry and insulted, he was reduced to sending a plaintive letter back to the Soviet Premier. He did receive the promise that the United States would not invade, but that was certainly cold comfort. The CIA continued its efforts to assassinate the Cuban leader, and he was well aware that U.S.–Cuban relations were unlikely to improve. The crisis had demonstrated that the Cold War was about the strategic relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union, and that Latin America was viewed by the two superpowers largely in terms of its effect on that relationship. Their own security was always the driving force of policy.

The Administration of Lyndon Johnson

On the assassination of President Kennedy, Vice President Lyndon Baines Johnson moved into the White House. Like Kennedy, Johnson needed to prove that he and the Democratic party had a strong and anti-Communist foreign policy. Unlike Kennedy, Johnson already had firm anti-Communist credentials. As a member of the Senate in 1949, he had destroyed the political career of the chairman of the Federal Power Commission, who needed Johnson's committee to approve him for another term. Using dubious evidence and tactics that were becoming all too common, Johnson accused him of being Communist and intimidated other senators at a time when Communist paranoia was widespread. This attitude would recur in policy toward Latin America.

Johnson's commitment to the Alliance for Progress was shaky, and his belief in the use of U.S. power to attack perceived national security threats was firm. In his own words, "we've got Alliance for Progress, but it is being run by an alliance of misfits."¹⁶ He was even more inclined than Kennedy to forge ties with Latin American militaries and to use covert action. His choice

of advisor on Latin American affairs showed that commitment. Thomas Mann was one of the first appointments that President Johnson made after Kennedy's assassination. Mann was often an outspoken critic of U.S.-led invasions, but took a hard line about the need to maintain stable and friendly governments. He also believed that the Alliance for Progress was unrealistic and the notion that a decade of development would solve the region's problems was "patently absurd."¹⁷ In particular, he opposed land reform, which he believed put too much land in the hands of small farmers who lacked the ability to produce crops on a large scale, thus weakening the overall economy.

As a senior advisor to the president, Mann's statements carried tremendous weight, and he argued against state-led industrialization and redistribution of wealth. His ideas all came together in a March 1964 address to senior officials (such as ambassadors) who worked in Latin America, which would be dubbed the Mann Doctrine. Interestingly, this "doctrine" was never made official in any document, but rather consisted of leaks of his address to reporters (in particular the *New York Times*, which ran a front-page article) and members of Congress. The administration, however, did not disavow its contents and clearly believed in them.

Mann said that U.S. policy had four goals: economic growth, protection of U.S. investments, noninterference "in the internal political affairs" of the hemisphere's republics, and opposition to Communism. The promotion of democracy was explicitly not part of the equation, because it was futile to try to "force" democracy on Latin American countries.

The Mann Doctrine emphasized stability over democracy. The policy of noninterference meant that if stable nondemocratic governments came to power, the United States would not try to "teach" them how to achieve democracy. According to Mann, the "antidictatorship policy" had failed to achieve any foreign policy goals. The clear implication was that the only rationale for intervention would be a Communist presence, where hemispheric stability would trump noninterference. The Alliance for Progress was never mentioned and slowly died off.

The New Guerrillas

And just who were these Communists who led the Johnson administration to openly reject the policy goal of promoting democracy? The U.S. government was obviously suspicious of leftists, but the emergence of guerrilla groups posed a threat to the socioeconomic status quo in Latin America. Guerrilla war was not new to Latin America; it had already been utilized against the United States, such as Pancho Villa's forces in Mexico or Augusto Sandino's in Nicaragua. Castro's success, however, transformed guerrilla warfare from a way to make isolated attacks to an internationally coordinated strategy to overthrow a government and remake the economic, political, and social structures

of a country. Che Guevara, whose intellectual influence was soon to be global, wrote his own theories of guerrilla war, which were published and disseminated widely. Being a Latin American guerrilla now meant becoming a Marxist revolutionary. Guevara himself came from a well-to-do Argentine family. Traveling around Latin America (including a now iconic motorcycle trip) and seeing so much poverty and suffering radicalized him. He was in Guatemala during the 1954 invasion, which in his eyes made the United States a permanent enemy of the people, with Marxism as their best solution.

In the first chapter of his book *Guerrilla War*, Guevara stated that the Cuban Revolution taught three lessons:

1. Popular forces can win a war against the army.
2. It is not necessary to wait until all conditions for making revolution exist; the insurrection can create them.
3. In underdeveloped America the countryside is the basic area for armed fighting.¹⁸

Although Guevara also argued that guerrillas alone cannot create all the conditions necessary for successful guerrilla warfare—he noted that “people must see clearly the futility of maintaining the fight for social goals within the framework of civil debate”—he plainly advocated the sparking of revolutionary wars wherever possible in the hemisphere.¹⁹ The fight required using favorable terrain, winning the hearts and minds of the peasants and workers, and refusing to attack the enemy military head-on. Guerrilla warfare was protracted and arduous because it did not allow for large-scale victories. Wearing down the enemy was the only means of victory.

Fidel Castro’s triumph thus became an example to other aspiring revolutionaries, and he actively cultivated their friendship. The Cuban example would be the guide for dozens of revolutionary groups organized in the 1960s across the region. Most would fail in their quest for political power, crushed by national armies (which received financial, technical, and logistical assistance from the United States). Sometimes they were even betrayed by the peasants they sought to help, who viewed the revolutionaries with suspicion, knowing that the army would always eventually arrive and begin indiscriminately killing anyone it decided had been an accessory to the guerrillas. In fact, in 1967 Bolivian peasants helped the military find Guevara himself, where he had traveled to recreate the Cuban experience. He was executed, then photographed for the world to see, and he passed immediately into martyrdom (and later an icon to be seen on T-shirts and posters).

In 1966, Guevara gave a famous speech in Havana at the first meeting of the Organization of Solidarity with the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, also called the Tricontinental. He proclaimed his hope for “two, three, many Vietnams” because U.S. action there was draining its economy and causing

domestic unrest for the Johnson administration. The time was nigh; the United States could be defeated and overwhelmed from all directions.

Many would-be rebels found great inspiration in Che's words, and guerrilla movements—generally founded on some variant of Marxism—took them to heart. Most were very small and/or short-lived; others managed to survive (see Table 6.1). Violence was ever present, including kidnappings as a way to extract ransom for funding. Guerrilla organizations in Colombia have persisted for fifty years. Some also received concrete assistance from the Cuban state. For U.S. policy makers, every guerrilla movement was Communist, directed by the USSR and aided by Cuba. This meant acceptance not only of a military response but also of harsh measures intended to intimidate local populations, extract information, and have wide latitude in deciding who deserved to die.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Cuba had an active policy of exporting revolution to other developing countries that served several foreign policy objectives: it deterred Cuba's enemies, raised the cost for the United States to pursue hostile relations, at times brought gratitude from the Soviet Union, and more generally fostered friendlier governments that would "make a world safer for Cuba's brand of socialism."²⁰ Over the years, Cuba aided the cause of Marxist revolution in both Latin America and Africa, including Algeria, Angola, Bolivia, Colombia, the Congo, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Morocco, Namibia, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. The level of support for rebels in each country varied, but all received some degree of assistance, especially in terms of military training from the highly skilled Cuban military advisors.

This proclivity to help fellow revolutionaries did not originate in orders from the Soviet Union—though the Soviets certainly welcomed any enlargement of the socialist camp—but rather reflected Castro's own commitment to the global struggle against capitalism. From the U.S. perspective, the distinction did not necessarily matter much because, regardless of the origins

Table 6.1 Major Guerrilla Movements in Latin America, 1960s–1980s (and Year of Creation)

Argentina – Montoneros 1970
Chile – Left Revolutionary Movement (MIR) 1966; Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front (FPMR) 1983
Colombia – Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) 1966; Army of National Liberation (ELN) 1964
El Salvador – Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) 1980
Guatemala – Rebel Armed Forces (FAR) 1962
Nicaragua – Sandinista Front of National Liberation (FSLN) 1961
Peru – Shining Path 1980; Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement 1983
Uruguay – Tupamaros 1963
Venezuela – Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN) 1963

of these movements, they posed a real threat to U.S. strategic interests and private investment. Plus, the Soviet Union was propping up the Cuban economy, which made the Marxist link apparent to everyone. Led by Fidel Castro, the small island, which at the time of the revolution had a population of only about 7 million (by contrast, in 1960 New York City alone had 7.8 million inhabitants), had managed to become the greatest intrahemispheric rival in the history of U.S.–Latin American relations.

Nonetheless, not everyone in Latin America who desired change was a guerrilla. Presidents such as Arturo Frondizi in Argentina, José Figueres in Costa Rica, Victor Haya de la Torre in Peru, and Rómulo Betancourt in Venezuela sought to redistribute national income through democratic means. Such reformers found themselves precariously balancing the needs of their own people and the international pressures of the Cold War. What they asked from the United States was flexibility. In 1962, President Adolfo López Mateos of Mexico told President Kennedy that improving social and economic conditions should be a central policy priority and that “the Alliance for Progress is the best way to combat Communism.”²¹

There was thus a middle ground between Communist and capitalist dictatorships, but its proponents often found themselves drowned out. They would also risk isolation if they deviated from U.S. Cold War policies, especially with regard to Castro’s Cuba. For example, President Frondizi of Argentina (1958–1962) refused to break diplomatic relations with Cuba, and although he was a moderate, the Kennedy administration made overtures to the Argentine military to help convince Frondizi to denounce Cuba publicly. He eventually did so, but the military overthrew him anyway, and the U.S. government quickly recognized the new regime.

Latin American Militaries

The pressing need to prevent another Cuba brought the word “counterinsurgency” to the popular lexicon. For the United States, the presence of guerrilla fighters, or insurgents, required a coherent, well-organized, and decisive response. Latin American militaries, which had already been forging ties to the United States in the 1950s, became natural allies. For the armed forces, Communism represented a cancer eating away at the nation itself. As with a cancer in the human body, the only way to achieve victory was by killing it off. Civilian and military governments alike passed new national security legislation expanding the internal missions of the armed forces. Militaries were given domestic law enforcement functions and put in charge of controlling the population with regard to strikes, protests, riots, and land seizures.²² They were also put in charge of many civic projects, such as natural disaster response and building roads. In short, they became even more deeply involved at virtually every level of government and society.

The United States supported the expansion of Latin American military activities. In countries beset by chronic instability, the armed forces often constituted the best-organized institution. That fact, combined with their training and weapons, led U.S. policy makers to view them as an ally against Communist subversion. Latin American militaries were not given any more respect than in the past—over time, intelligence reports were open about the brutality and crudeness of military governments and counterinsurgency operations—but were viewed simply as a necessary actor in a global war.

To help the armed forces, the United States revamped its military school in the Panama Canal Zone (founded in 1946) and in 1963 renamed it the United States Army School of the Americas. The changes in curriculum reflected the impact of the Cuban revolution. A new counterinsurgency course taught officers how to weed out subversive elements in the population, gather intelligence, and employ psychological warfare. By the late 1960s, lessons on the “fallacies of the Communist theory” were integrated into every course, even motor pool operations.²³ Very quickly, there were new courses in jungle operations, military intelligence, and counterinsurgency.

Covert Action and Chile

Covert action was utilized even in situations where a guerrilla force was not yet a threat. In Chile, one of the most stable countries in the hemisphere, democratic elections had advanced the cause of Senator Salvador Allende, a member of the Socialist party. He had first run for president in 1952 and then ran in each subsequent presidential election, gradually gaining a greater share of votes. His platform called for sweeping reforms that challenged the socioeconomic status quo and capitalism itself, but all within the context of democracy, which had deeper roots in Chile than in many other Latin American countries.

Allende’s electoral gains brought Chile onto the foreign policy radar of the Johnson administration, which viewed him as politically dangerous by virtue of his socialist views. Chilean elections were scheduled for 1964, and the CIA was instructed to do whatever necessary to prevent Allende from winning. Chile quickly became the largest single recipient of Alliance for Progress funds, and moderate Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei’s campaign became flush, as half of its assets had been funneled through the CIA. The operation was deemed a success when Frei won handily and Allende returned to the senate. Covert action, it seemed, could achieve anything.

Covert Action and Brazil

Another test for the Johnson administration and the Mann Doctrine was in Brazil. In the 1950s, President Juscelino Kubitschek had tried in vain to get Washington’s attention on economic issues in order to increase levels of aid to counter Communism, and by the end of the decade much of the country

was moving leftward. The 1960 election brought state governor Janio Quadros to office. Quadros's rhetoric, which combined nationalism, solidarity with the developing world, and support for state-led development (and even with Fidel Castro), made U.S. officials believe he was too soft on Communism for comfort. Quadros resigned in 1961, in a strange gambit seemingly intended to compel elites to woo him back. No one did so, however, and Vice President João Goulart took power. Goulart's rhetoric was similarly alarming to the United States and, in conjunction with economic crisis, unrest, and political conflict, led the Kennedy administration to fear a Communist takeover. It therefore made contacts with the Brazilian military to communicate U.S. support for a coup. The Johnson administration did the same and, by early 1964, had sent strong signals, including stationing an aircraft carrier off the coast.

The coup occurred in March 1964, a mere two weeks after the Mann Doctrine was announced. In a sign of the new times, the military did not hand back power to civilians, but instead began a campaign of terror to eliminate all "subversive" elements in the country. It provided no timetable for elections or for military withdrawal from the government. However, U.S. policy makers were perfectly content. The military had saved Brazil from Communism and made it more appealing for investors who, they believed, would foster economic growth and create jobs and stability.

After the coup, Johnson called Mann to mention how pleased he was with the change of government in Brazil:

MANN: I hope you're as happy about Brazil as I am.

LBJ: I am.

MANN: I think that's the most important thing that's happened in the hemisphere in three years.

LBJ: I hope they give us some credit, instead of hell.²⁴

The event was indeed important, although only with hindsight is it evident how much. The overthrow of a democratic government in Brazil, the largest country in Latin America, was a sign of things to come. U.S. presidents had become accustomed to overthrowing governments, but had limited themselves to small nations in the Caribbean and Central America. The overt moral support for toppling the government of a large South American country took the Cold War to a new level.

The United States also continued to work through the OAS to isolate the Castro regime. In a meeting of foreign ministers in 1964 (four months after the Brazilian coup), the United States invoked the Rio Treaty in an effort to condemn Cuba for supplying arms to rebels in Venezuela. In a fifteen-to-four vote (Bolivia, Chile, Mexico, and Uruguay voted against, while Argentina abstained), the countries of the region agreed not to maintain diplomatic or consular relations and even to suspend all trade with Cuba

except for humanitarian reasons. Such measures, however, never held. Although the United States placed increasing pressure on Latin American leaders to accept the idea that Cuba posed an imminent threat, it was never fully successful in doing so. As U.S. efforts to topple governments continued, the Castro government remained defiant.

Hegemony and Invasion: The Case of the Dominican Republic

Johnson also inherited a long-running debate about how to address events in the Dominican Republic. Support in the administration for Rafael Trujillo remained significant; he was, after all, an ardent anti-Communist. Many policy makers agreed with Louisiana Senator Russell Long, who in 1956 argued that Trujillo was no dictator because he held elections, and it did not even matter what kind of regime he had “so long as it is not an atheistic Communist government which would endanger our own safety and security.”²⁵ Trujillo, however, was demonstrating such greed and venality that members of the U.S. Congress began to call for cutting off aid. For example, a Spanish exile who had just written an anti-Trujillo doctoral dissertation in the United States was kidnapped and taken to the Dominican Republic, where he was killed. To cover up the murder, Trujillo also killed the U.S. pilot who had unwittingly flown the victim to this death. From the perspective of U.S. policy, repressing one’s own citizens was not necessarily a problem, but operating on U.S. soil was a different matter, and several members of Congress took great interest in the case. Meanwhile Trujillo’s son—an air force general—lived lavishly in Hollywood while ostensibly training with the help of U.S. foreign aid.

Trujillo was becoming an embarrassment, but for the Eisenhower administration the situation in his country was bearing a close resemblance to Batista’s Cuba, and after the Cuban revolution U.S. support for the dictator disappeared. Trujillo also posed a challenge to gathering hemispheric opposition to Castro. The State Department noted that Trujillo’s presence “makes more difficult the achievement of U.S. objectives with respect to Cuba because of the tendency of many Latin Americans to place hatred of Trujillo higher than concern of Castro.”²⁶ It was evident that Latin American moderates, who were both open to reform and anti-Communist, were not interested in supporting the U.S. position on Castro as long as it continued to tolerate Trujillo’s regime. Trujillo, then, was an obstacle to U.S. influence.

The administration tried to persuade him to step down, but he refused, so Eisenhower gave the CIA an order to assist Dominican dissidents in assassinating him. As that was being planned in 1960, Eisenhower

broke off diplomatic relations and imposed new taxes on imported Dominican sugar. In May 1961, CIA-supported Dominicans shot Trujillo to death. Unfortunately, assassinating the president did not serve to stabilize Dominican politics. Instead, it stirred the cauldron of political conflict. His brothers and sons managed to maintain control of the armed forces, and his hand-picked successor, Joaquín Balaguer, fought off rebellions. In 1961 one of those rebellions exiled the entire remaining Trujillo family.

An election in 1962 brought Juan Bosch, a longtime Trujillo foe, to office. But the perception among conservatives and the armed forces that he was dangerously leftist led to his overthrow a year later. His replacement, Donald Reid Cabral, suffered the same fate in April 1965. The military had split into two factions. The pro-Bosch group referred to themselves as “Constitutionalists” because they wished to put Bosch back into the presidency (their opponents called them the “Rebel” group); the latter called themselves “Loyalists,” referring to support of the fallen Reid government (their opposition labeled them “Military” of its armed forces and police members). In an increasingly violent atmosphere, the “Loyalists” requested U.S. intervention.

The Dominican Republic moved toward civil war as the Constitutionalists armed themselves with weapons captured from police arsenals. When it became clear that the Loyalists were beginning to lose, the Johnson administration decided to send U.S. Marines. President Johnson at times seemed convinced that the Constitutionalists were being directed from Moscow and that events in disparate parts of the world were all interconnected in conspiratorial ways. As he told his national security advisor, “I am seeing the pattern and I can’t be silent. ... What they are doing in La Paz, Bolivia, what they are doing in Mexico City and what they are doing in Vietnam and the Dominican Republic is not totally unrelated.”²⁷ But, importantly, he was also constantly concerned about public opinion. For Johnson, Latin America policy was periodically intermestic, driven in large part by domestic political concerns. At the same time, however, Johnson remained concerned about the potential expansion of Communism around the world. After deciding to invade, he summoned two high-ranking Republicans (including future president Gerald Ford) to say that he had “just taken an action that will prove that Democratic presidents can deal with Communists as strongly as Republicans.”²⁸

The invasion prompted global outcries of opposition. The OAS had been bypassed, with Johnson stating that there had been no time for consultation. In a phone conversation to Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, Johnson explained his view of the OAS:

They’re just the damndest fraud I ever saw. ... These international organizations ain’t worth a damn, except window dressing. ... It looks to me like I’m in a hell of a shape. ... They’re going to eat us up if I let another Cuba come in there. They’ll say, “Why did you sit on your big fat tail?”²⁹

Instead, with the help of ideological allies, the United States sought OAS approval after the fact to provide the proper “window dressing.” With the bare minimum of votes necessary, the OAS created the Inter-American Peace Force, which would replace U.S. soldiers. In fact, the overall number of IAPF troops remained small. In contrast, the U.S. public was firmly in favor, because the action was framed in terms of preventing another Cuba. Despite sometimes acrimonious debate, the U.S. House of Representatives voted 213–52 in favor of a resolution supporting the president’s use of force.

With the support of the OAS, the United States worked to find a provisional president for the Dominican Republic, someone relatively moderate and acceptable. That person was Héctor García Godoy. Elections were then held in 1966, pitting Bosch against Balaguer. Balaguer, the former supporter of Trujillo, became president, and the Dominican Republic again disappeared as a central U.S. policy priority. What remained was a renewed willingness of the U.S. government to invade and occupy a small Latin American country.

Summary and Conclusion

The Cuban Revolution had a truly massive impact on U.S. policy and Latin American elites, on the one hand, and on the attitude of the Latin American left, on the other. To the former, the revolution was a sign of the spread of Soviet-directed Communist movements and the pressing need to stop it in any way possible. To the latter, Castro’s success was a symbol of hope; the United States was not all-powerful, and so radical reform was within the realm of possibility. Understanding the dynamics of post-Cuban revolution relations requires a close look at power.

The use of power to advance national interests was all too evident, as was the utter U.S. disdain for international institutions such as the OAS. Realism asserts that in an anarchic system, such organizations cannot act as effective police powers. Such institutions were useful to U.S. leaders only to the extent that they might legitimate actions the United States already planned on launching. Cuba represented a threat to U.S. hegemony in the region, so any and all manifestations of military and economic power were on the table. Added to this was the fact that presidents in the United States felt tremendous political pressure not to look weak and not to give in to what was commonly seen as Soviet expansionism.

The Alliance for Progress seemed to represent a new approach, centered on the notion that economic development could decrease the appeal of Communism in countries beset by poverty. Its ambitious goals could not be met, however, and never implied the reduction of U.S. covert and overt actions to destabilize “unfriendly” governments. When Lyndon Johnson

assumed office after Kennedy's assassination, he and his advisors paid only lip service to the Alliance. Security required decisive action, often covert.

The Mann Doctrine enunciated in 1964 outlined the future trajectory of U.S. policy, which involved a much more open encouragement of military action against governments considered either too leftist or just too soft on Communism. The 1964 Brazilian coup, which ushered in more than twenty years of dictatorship, was one of the first signs of this policy shift. The 1965 invasion of the Dominican Republic demonstrated the lengths to which the United States was willing to go when a Communist threat had been identified. Unlike the invasions of Guatemala (1954) and Cuba (1961), in the Dominican Republic the United States did not resort to potentially unreliable national dissidents and did not hide U.S. participation in any way. By that time, the war in Vietnam was rapidly widening, and the Johnson Administration believed the global stakes were so high that U.S. troops were necessary. Interestingly, U.S. policy makers and Latin American guerrillas alike believed that the example of Vietnam was connected to U.S.–Latin American relations.

In Latin America, conflict arose as leftists, inspired by Fidel Castro's example, struggled to reform or even to overturn long-held elite control over politics and the economy. Dependency theory would assert that the revolution was about breaking the economic chains that had bound Cuba to the United States since 1898. These counterhegemonic movements were instilled with a nationalistic and anti-imperialist fervor that stood in direct contrast to almost all U.S. interests. Some of them would sputter; others would last for decades (and, in the case of the Sandinistas, would successfully overthrow a government). The U.S. hegemony in the Latin America was no longer complete. The resulting clashes led to one of the darkest periods of U.S.–Latin American relations.

Notes

- 1 Cardoso and Faletto 1979, xxiv.
- 2 Thomas 1998, 1075.
- 3 Quoted in Schoultz 1998, 355.
- 4 Quoted in Blasier 1976, 194.
- 5 Avalon Project Website.
- 6 Avalon Project Website.
- 7 Quoted in Holden and Zolov 2000, 222.
- 8 Quoted in Crankshaw 1970, 493.
- 9 Goodwin 1988, 109.
- 10 Levinson and de Onís 1970, 134.
- 11 Holden and Zolov 2000, 231.
- 12 Kornbluh 1998, 12.
- 13 Kornbluh 1998, 12.

- 14 Allison and Zelikow 1999, 81.
- 15 Zubok and Pleshakov 1996, 207.
- 16 Quoted in Beschloss 1997, 74.
- 17 Quoted in LaFeber 1993, 182.
- 18 Quoted in Loveman and Davies 1985, 47.
- 19 Quoted in Loveman and Davies 1985, 48.
- 20 Dominguez 1989, 114.
- 21 Quoted in Rabe 1999, 19.
- 22 Loveman 1999, 181.
- 23 Weeks 2003.
- 24 Quoted in Beschloss 1997, 306.
- 25 Quoted in Atkins and Wilson 1997, 113.
- 26 Quoted in Rabe 1988, 155.
- 27 Quoted in McPherson 2003, 126.
- 28 Quoted in Chester 2001, 262.
- 29 Quoted in Beschloss 2001, 297.

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- Kornbluh, Peter. *Bay of Pigs Declassified: The Secret CIA Report on the Invasion of Cuba* (New York: New Press, 1998). A fascinating edited collection of declassified CIA documents. It is, the author argues, "the most brutally honest self-examination ever conducted inside the agency" in discussing why the operation was such a failure.

Websites

Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961–1963, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath. As part of the FRUS series online, this site offers detailed memoranda of meetings, telegrams, telephone conversations, and other interactions between the key members of the U.S. government. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v11>

Cuban Missile Crisis. A site developed by Harvard College that provides primary documents, commentary, and analyses about the crisis itself and crisis decision making in general, links to other sites on the topic, and a bibliography on further sources (including those by Soviet officials). <http://www.cubanmissilecrisis.org/>

School of the Americas Watch. The website of a nonprofit organization dedicated to closing the School of the Americas (in 2001, renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute of Security Cooperation). It contains detailed descriptions of the school's graduates, especially those involved in human rights abuses, copies of press articles about the school, and other information about military abuses of power. <http://www.soaw.org>

CIA Electronic Reading Room, Bay of Pigs. As a result of the Freedom of Information Act, the Central Intelligence Agency has placed online its own assessment of the failure of the Bay of Pigs. It consists of four volumes with documents dating back to 1951. <http://www.foia.cia.gov/collection/bay-pigs-release>

The Communist Threat and U.S. Intervention

Timeline

- 1973 United States supports coup in Chile
- 1975 Church Committee report released
- 1977 Panama Canal treaties signed
- 1979 Sandinistas overthrow Anastasio Somoza
- 1980 Ronald Reagan elected president
- 1981 The Contras receive U.S. funding
- 1983 United States invades Grenada
- 1987 Esquipulas II Accords signed
- 1988 George H. W. Bush elected president
- 1989 United States invades Panama
- 1992 Peace agreements implemented in El Salvador and Nicaragua
- 1999 Panama Canal treaties go into force

During the 1960s, the effects of the Cuban revolution—especially in terms of support for guerrilla warfare against U.S. allies—became all too evident, and the United States pursued interventionism with new vigor. This renewed use of power included economic and diplomatic pressures, veiled threats, covert operations, and even invasion. The Cold War was framed as a valiant struggle to protect freedom in the hemisphere, and the cases of Cuba and Guatemala epitomized the lengths to which the United States would go to fight what it considered to be security threats. In Latin America, many elites supported U.S. policy, but a growing undercurrent of discontent also emerged, which pushed for negotiated conclusions to war and protested against the treatment

of so many citizens caught in the middle. They did not share the notion that leftist or even Marxist governments automatically constituted a threat to national security and global order. This chapter examines how the Mann Doctrine and the 1964 coup in Brazil marked a new intensification of the Cold War in Latin America.

In theoretical terms, this era conforms well in many ways to the expectations of realism. According to the theory, states are primarily interested in protecting themselves in an anarchic international system. The rationale for the use of force during this period was self-preservation, expressed in almost apocalyptic terms, and power was employed in manners wholly divorced from international law. Although international institutions and even specific Latin American leaders did become more prominent actors, given the preponderance of U.S. power they were not able to block U.S. actions. Nonetheless, both U.S. and Latin American voices, raised against these dictatorships, were heard as never before and did eventually play a part in finding solutions to problems to which the United States had greatly contributed. Institutions within the region were still weak and would be for some time.

Dependency theorists, however, would not agree. From that view, in the context of the Cold War, the United States was seeking to ensure its continued and privileged access to important primary goods, which was threatened by the possibility of nationalization associated with socialist movements. Intervention, therefore, was related less to security than to the needs of capitalism. If investments were threatened by land for reform, for example, governments could be ousted and the economic status quo preserved.

Strategies for Fighting “Subversion”

The military overthrow of Brazilian President João Goulart in 1964 demonstrated that the United States was perfectly willing to support coups if they were aimed at ousting governments deemed too leftist. Unlike Cuba, Nicaragua, or the Dominican Republic, which were small, close-by countries that had been within the U.S. sphere of influence for many years, Brazil was a large, economically dynamic country with leaders who refused to kowtow to the United States. The Brazilian coup would soon be repeated in other more geographically distant Latin American countries, even some (like Chile and Uruguay) where such overthrows were historically fewer and further between. Although the circumstances would vary, they would share certain characteristics. In some manner, the left would either gain power or threaten to do so, which would be marked by socioeconomic conflict and elite apprehension. The opposition, with the support of the majority of the military leadership, would label leftist movements as Communist. The United States, often through its extensive CIA contacts, would assure the country's armed forces that a new military government would receive U.S. support.

Coups and military actions were not the only means of dispensing with “undesirable” governments. Into the 1970s, assassination—in some cases approved by the U.S. president himself—was another policy option. In 1975, Senator Frank Church chaired Senate committees that investigated and reported on covert operations and political assassinations. In addition to a report on Chile, the Select Committee to Study Government Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities released a long report entitled “Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders.” It had a distinctly Latin American emphasis, including plots against Fidel Castro, Rafael Trujillo, and Chilean Army Commander in Chief René Schneider. (The other two specific cases were Patrice Lumumba of the Congo and President Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam, both of whom were killed.)

The report detailed extensive U.S. involvement in murdering (or, in the case of Castro, attempting to murder) foreign leaders. With regard to Castro, the plots reflected covert operations run amok, with references to poisoned cigars, mafia contacts, and chemicals to make his beard fall out. To kill Trujillo and Schneider, the CIA worked closely with opposition groups, even providing weapons intended to carry out the job (though it was not clear whether those exact weapons were used). As a result of the study, in 1976 President Gerald Ford issued Executive Order 11905, which outlawed political assassinations by employees of the U.S. government.

The debate over U.S. policy during the Cold War rages unabated. Supporters argue that, when all was said and done, the United States helped to win the overall war against Communist aggression and that its aggressive tactics served a noble overall purpose. The Soviet Union, often working through Fidel Castro, was a real threat to countries very close to the United States. From that perspective, since by the early 1990s Latin American countries were having elections, all previous actions—even violent—were worthwhile. Much of the violence, it can be argued, was initiated not by the United States but by armed groups seeking to overthrow legitimate governments. The abuses of human rights that did occur were regrettable, but should not detract from the regional victory.

Opponents have a different argument, one that emphasizes the exaggeration of the Communist threat, especially in terms of the United States viewing local demands for justice as a global Communist plot. Although the Soviet Union was certainly interested in the region, it was not directing events and was used by policy makers as a boogeyman to continue both overt and covert operations. The deaths of so many thousands could not ever be rationalized, regardless of the Cold War’s outcome, because none of them needed to die. The United States used its hegemonic position to reinforce its political grip on Latin America and refused to allow any radical changes that might loosen it. The main effect was to entrench long-term domination.

Box 7.1 Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders, an Interim Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Operations (Church Report, 1975)

The evidence establishes that the United States was implicated in several assassination plots. The Committee believes that, short of war, assassination is incompatible with American principles, international order, and morality. It should be rejected as a tool of foreign policy. ...

CUBA

We have found concrete evidence of at least eight plots involving the CIA to assassinate Fidel Castro from 1960 to 1965. Although some of the assassination plots did not advance beyond the stage of planning and preparation, one plot, involving the use of underworld figures, reportedly twice progressed to the point of sending poison pills to Cuba and dispatching teams to commit the deed. Another plot involved furnishing weapons and other assassination devices to a Cuban dissident. The proposed assassination devices ran the gamut from high-powered rifles to poison pills, poison pens, deadly bacterial powders, and other devices which strain the imagination. ...

Efforts against Castro did not begin with assassination attempts. From March through August 1960, during the last year of the Eisenhower Administration, the CIA considered plans to undermine Castro's charismatic appeal by sabotaging his speeches. According to the 1967 Report of the CIA's Inspector General, an official in the Technical Services Division (TSD) recalled discussing a scheme to spray Castro's broadcasting studio with a chemical which produced effects similar to LSD, but the scheme was rejected because the chemical was unreliable. During this period, TSD impregnated a box of cigars with a chemical which produced temporary disorientation, hoping to induce Castro to smoke one of the cigars before delivering a speech. The Inspector General also reported a plan to destroy Castro's image as "The Beard" by dusting his shoes with thallium salts, a strong depilatory that would cause his beard to fall out. The depilatory was to be administered during a trip outside Cuba, when it was anticipated Castro would leave his shoes outside the door of his hotel room to be shined. TSD procured the chemical and tested it on animals, but apparently abandoned the scheme because Castro cancelled his trip. ...

[A]n official was given a box of Castro's favorite cigars with instructions to treat them with lethal poison. The cigars were contaminated with a botulinum toxin so potent that a person would die after putting one in his mouth. The official reported that the cigars were ready on October 7, 1960; TSD notes indicated that they were delivered to an unidentified person on February 13, 1961. The record does not disclose whether an attempt was made to pass the cigars to Castro. ...

TRUJILLO

Trujillo was a brutal dictator, and both the Eisenhower and Kennedy Administrations encouraged the overthrow of his regime by Dominican dissidents. Toward that end the highest policy levels of both Administrations approved or condoned supplying arms to the dissidents. Although there is no evidence that the United States instigated any assassination activity, certain evidence tends to link United States officials to the assassination plans.

Material support, consisting of three pistols and three carbines, was supplied to various dissidents. While United States' officials knew that the dissidents intended to overthrow Trujillo, probably by assassination, there is no direct evidence that the weapons which were passed were used in the assassination. ...

Late in the evening of May 30, 1961, Trujillo was ambushed and assassinated near San Cristobal, Dominican Republic. The assassination closely paralleled the plan disclosed by the action group to American representatives in the Dominican Republic and passed on to officials in Washington at both the CIA and the State Department.

There is no indication or suggestion contained in the record of those post-assassination meetings, or in the Robert Kennedy notes, of concern as to the propriety of the known United States involvement in the assassination. Nor is there any record that anyone took steps following Trujillo's assassination to reprimand or censure any of the American officials involved either on the scene or in Washington, or to otherwise make known any objections or displeasure as to the degree of United States involvement in the events which had transpired.

SCHNEIDER

On September 15, 1970, President Richard Nixon informed CIA Director Richard Helms that an Allende regime in Chile would not be acceptable to the United States. The CIA was instructed by President Nixon to play a direct role in organizing a military coup d'etat in Chile to prevent Allende's accession to the presidency. ...

One of the major obstacles faced by all the military conspirators in Chile was the strong opposition to the coup by the Commander-in-Chief

of the Army, General Rene Schneider, who insisted the constitutional process be followed. As a result of his strong constitutional stand, the removal of General Schneider became a necessary ingredient in the coup plans of all the Chilean conspirators. Unable to have General Schneider retired or reassigned, the conspirators decided to kidnap him. An unsuccessful abduction attempt was made on October 19, 1970, by a group of Chilean military officers whom the CIA was actively supporting. A second kidnap attempt was made the following day, again unsuccessfully. In the early morning hours of October 22, 1970, machine guns and ammunition were passed by the CIA to the group that had failed on October 19. That same day General Schneider was mortally wounded in an attempted kidnap on his way to work.

By the end of September 1970, it appeared that the only feasible way for the CIA to implement the Presidential order to prevent Allende from coming to power was to foment a coup d'etat. All of the known coup plots developed within the Chilean military entailed the removal of General Schneider by one means or another.

Source: Church Report, pp. 71-73, 191, 213, 215, 225-226. <http://www.intelligence.senate.gov/churchcommittee.html>

The Nixon Administration and South America

In 1968, Lyndon Johnson made the surprise announcement that he would not run for reelection as president, and Richard Nixon won the November election. Like Johnson, Nixon had a history of using the perceived threat of Communism to attack political opponents, which became manifest in policy toward Latin America. He also had personal experience in the 1958 incident in Venezuela, when angry protesters mobbed his car. Nixon viewed Latin America almost strictly in security terms. With the dangers of Communism always paramount, his attention was often elsewhere, and he looked at the region largely in terms of its effect on U.S. global interests. For the White House, that danger was rapidly becoming evident in South America.

South America became more prominent for the United States during World War II, as it sought hemispheric unity against an external enemy. After Castro's victory, the same happened again. Many countries in South America had long histories of socialist and Communist parties, workers' movements, and democracy, and these very combinations made them ideological battlefields. The United States looked to South America as a region that would help decide the Cold War.

The Case of Chile

The violent military overthrow of democratically elected socialist president Salvador Allende in Chile provides the perfect example of the complex relationships between the U.S. government, Latin American militaries, reformist efforts, and democracy, and of the ways in which the power imbalance had a direct impact on the future of a country. The U.S. goal of promoting democracy had withered under the relentless logic of the Cold War. In Latin America, even presidents who came to office through free and fair elections could find themselves targets if they were on the wrong side of the ideological divide.

Despite the concerted effort of Chilean conservatives and the U.S. government, Allende was elected president in 1970, though since he did not receive a majority the final decision went to Congress. The CIA was even involved in a plot to assassinate Army Commander in Chief René Schneider and then blame it on leftists in order to move the congressional vote against Allende. Two days after Allende was inaugurated, President Nixon told his National Security Council, "We want to do it right and bring him down. ... We have to do everything we can to hurt [Allende] and bring him down."¹ It was unthinkable that a socialist president be allowed to prosper while the Cold War raged on. In the eyes of the Nixon administration, acceptance would just be an invitation for other leftists to seek power, all of whom would eventually become like Cuba—Communist puppets of the Soviet Union.

President Nixon and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger decided against an overt policy of hostility, which could backfire by making Allende more popular. Instead, they chose a less public strategy, such as using U.S. leverage at the International Development Bank and the World Bank to block new loans to Chile, while also drastically cutting bilateral aid through the Agency for International Development and the U.S. Export-Import Bank. It was in this context that Nixon made his famous statement that he wanted to make the Chilean economy "scream."² The idea (similar to the logic with Cuba) was that a sharp economic downturn would reduce popular support for the Allende government and accelerate his downfall. The only aid that continued—and in fact increased—was military, which was intended to curry favor with anti-Allende officers.

These efforts by the United States did not take place in a political vacuum. Allende's election had polarized Chile. The constitution stipulated that if no candidate won a majority of the popular vote, then Congress would decide between the two who had won the most. Allende received a plurality (that is, the most) of the vote, but only 36 percent of the total. Congress, following its tradition of approving the election of whichever candidate had received the most votes, did finally vote to elect Allende, but only after a bitter debate that included forcing him to sign an agreement supporting

a number of constitutional guarantees before allowing him to assume the presidency.

Allende's platform was a "peaceful road to socialism" and entailed a far greater role of the state, nationalization of land, increased wages, and other measures intended to redistribute income. The policy of the U.S. government thus received support from certain sectors in Chile: business leaders, conservatives, many military officers, and even right-wing terrorists began to receive both encouragement and financial aid in the quest to "cleanse" Chile and prevent it from becoming "another Cuba." Strikes and other disruptive measures contributed to the crisis atmosphere and led to shortages of basic goods.

Meanwhile, under Kissinger's personal direction, the CIA began a coordinated effort to have Allende overthrown.³ In 1971, one CIA cable explicitly noted, "We conceive our mission as one in which we work consciously and deliberately in the direction of a coup."⁴ On September 11, 1973, the military initiated its coup plans, which included bombing the presidential palace and imprisoning thousands of Chileans. The government was overthrown, Allende killed (although rumored to have been murdered, most evidence suggests he committed suicide rather than be taken prisoner), and a military government under the direction of General Augusto Pinochet settled in.

The debate over U.S. culpability in the coup began immediately and has continued over time as more U.S. government documents are declassified and released. The Nixon administration, with the personal attention of Henry Kissinger, went to great lengths to have Allende removed from power. It made very clear to the Chilean armed forces that the United States would immediately recognize a military government and would restore all the credits and loans that were being blocked. That was an important "green light." At the same time, it knew very little about who was plotting what, and so there is no evidence of direct involvement in the coup itself. After the coup, the United States also worked closely with the Pinochet government to ensure its long-term survival. In addition to providing all the financial aid denied to Allende, the U.S. government was quick to tell the Chilean military, just as it would military governments throughout the region, that they were allies against a widespread Communist invasion. Only gradually would the human rights abuses of the Chilean dictatorship create significant opposition within the U.S. executive and legislative branches.

The Spread of Military Governments in Latin America

The period beginning with the Cuban Revolution (1959) and ending with the dissolution of the Soviet Union (1990–1991) saw the proliferation of U.S.-supported military governments. As already mentioned, South America

had become a Cold War battleground, with its militaries working to erase all traces of the left, reformers, or anyone else labeled “subversive.” In Paraguay, dictator Alfredo Stroessner was already in power at the time of Castro’s revolution, but by the mid-1970s there were also dictatorships in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, and Uruguay (of South American countries, only Colombia and Venezuela retained civilian governments, largely because of strong elite-based agreements to share power).

Reports of brutal human rights abuses poured into U.S. embassies and were picked up by the U.S. press, while the State Department was peppered with similar confidential messages. People, even U.S. citizens, were being arrested without warrants, held incommunicado, interrogated, tortured, and sometimes executed and/or disappeared (referring to the disappearance of an individual, who would eventually be presumed dead with no body found).

Similar events were playing out around South America. In Argentina, a military government came to power in 1976 and quickly established itself as even more repressive than its Chilean counterpart. The generals viewed themselves as on the U.S. side in the Cold War and consequently put out diplomatic feelers for support. Kissinger, who had become secretary of state, met with the Argentine foreign minister and Argentina’s ambassador to the United States. They were concerned about the negative press the military government was receiving and sought assurances that U.S. policy would not be affected by it. Kissinger quickly reassured him:

Look, our basic attitude is that we would like you to succeed. I have an old-fashioned view that friends ought to be supported. What is not understood in the United States is that you have a civil war. We read about human rights problems but not the context. The quicker you succeed the better.⁵

At the time, the Argentine military was actively attacking its political opposition, labeling all opponents Communist. Its actions would become known as the Dirty War for the tactics used. Upwards of 20,000 people were killed in Argentina. As in Chile, the logistical problem of dealing with bodies was resolved in part by throwing them into the ocean (with their bodies either slit open to prevent floating or attached to railroad ties to weigh them down). Over time, more evidence has come to light that demonstrates U.S. contribution to Operation Condor, an organization created by the Chilean dictatorship to enable cooperation between military governments in their efforts to track down their political enemies. As Patrice McSherry writes, “U.S. military and intelligence officials, operating from the Canal Zone headquarters and U.S. embassies, provided vital resources and support to upgrade, modernize, and make more efficient the program of coordinated repression.”⁶ The full implications of human rights policy will be addressed in more detail in subsequent chapters.

Latin American Reactions

The sheer brutality of military dictatorships in Latin America gave rise to new actors in U.S.–Latin American relations who had no ties to governments. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) became more prominent in response to political violence. They included religious groups, academic think tanks, international social movements and organizations, and individual activists. They grew out of disillusionment, because their members had come to believe that governments—both in Latin America and in the United States—would not willingly support democratic change. Especially in the 1980s, they organized protests against U.S. policy in Central America that defined even more explicitly the political differences in the United States over the Reagan administration's handling of Central American crises and human rights abuses. In the context of liberal institutional theory, they represented a new way to prevent the United States and its allies from ignoring human rights concerns. By providing information and testimony to organizations like the OAS, they could effectively contradict the message that the abuses of military governments were minimal or solely the work of rogue elements within the armed forces. They also forged ties with individual members of Congress who brought the issues up and called for hearings.

Although anti-Communist dictatorships in Latin America generally turned to the United States for aid, trade, and political support, there were other notable alliances as well. For example, the Non-Aligned Movement formalized in 1961 as a counterweight to both U.S. and Soviet influence. Many countries, some of which were newly independent, wanted to avoid being cornered ideologically and also wanted to support movements intended to break the chains of colonization (especially French and Portuguese colonies in Africa). Fidel Castro became an enthusiastic supporter of the Non-Aligned Movement and used it to great effect in the United Nations, where he could often rely on votes from nonaligned countries to overcome U.S. opposition to Cuban participation in various U.N. committees. Many other Latin American countries joined as well, although both Brazil and Mexico remained only observers to stay as flexible as possible.

Given the Non-Aligned Movement's emphasis on economic independence, it heartily endorsed the notion that Latin American countries should have the right to pursue economic policies autonomously, without pressure from the United States. The same message emerged through the Group of 77, a collection of developing countries that came together in 1964 as a result of the first United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Its goal was to provide developing countries a collective voice that could offset the hegemonic position of the wealthiest countries. This was balancing. It worked as a coalition within the United Nations and called for increased cooperation and assistance from developed

countries in terms of access to capital, aid, technology transfers, and control over foreign investment. The Organization of American States proved not to be an effective brake on U.S. policies. In some cases, U.S. policy makers evinced barely disguised contempt. For example, when talking privately to President Johnson about Panama, Senator Richard Russell told him, "You've got all the cards, and this damn yapping over here by this OAS doesn't amount to a thing. Just because they feel like they've got to stick together."⁷ Yet it did remain an important vehicle for Latin American voices of dissent with U.S. policies, and so the United States could not simply ignore it.

Taken together, these efforts at contradicting or protesting U.S. policy reflected broad and diverse disillusionment with the rigidities of Cold War politics and raised potent questions about its human costs. Public consciousness in many different countries was raised through their actions, and many lives saved. However, given the sheer economic and military strength of the United States, they could not fundamentally negate the effects of the ideological war.

Political Turmoil in Central America

Despite efforts in the 1960s to spur economic growth, Central American countries suffered as prices for their primary products—especially bananas and coffee—declined. With the exception of Costa Rica, which avoided military adventurism by virtue of having dismantled the institution entirely in 1949, socioeconomic conflict was intense in the 1960s and 1970s, made worse by an oil shock and a drastic rise in prices in 1973. Dependency theory helps us understand that dynamic, since Central America rose and fell with international prices for commodities, much to its own detriment. As had always been the case, the wealth of the region was in land, which in turn was owned by a relatively small but very powerful oligarchy closely tied to the armed forces. In his history of Central America, Ralph Lee Woodward notes, "Widespread corruption, the heritage of an underpaid and poorly trained bureaucracy, resistance to structural change, and protection of position and wealth characterized the elites everywhere."⁸

The economic and political might of United Fruit was no longer an issue because the company had ceased to exist. An antitrust lawsuit filed in 1954 was used by the U.S. government to begin breaking it up in 1958. For example, it sold off parts of its Guatemala operation to Standard Fruit. As it divested, the company changed its name to United Brands, which in 1990 became Chiquita (named after a cartoon banana dressed as a woman launched as an ad campaign in 1944). To this day, it continues to operate under the Chiquita brand name. Even as United Fruit was taken apart, the U.S. government's policy emphasis shifted clearly away from economic factors.

The proximity of Cuba, combined with societies in a state of upheaval, brought national security front and center.

The militaries in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras were firmly in power. In Nicaragua the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza (his father had originally been hand-picked by the United States to head the country's National Guard), though unpopular, survived with U.S. economic assistance. These countries' economies were deeply tied to the United States, from which they bought manufactured goods. U.S. hegemony was well rooted.

Revolution and Response in Nicaragua

Guerrilla organizations in Nicaragua had appeared after the Cuban Revolution, but by the time President Jimmy Carter took office in January 1977 there was an armed opposition movement making real progress in its efforts to topple the incumbent regime. The Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN), which had been active but not very successful in the 1960s, saw a resurgence after 1972. That year, a massive earthquake hit the capital of Managua, and Somoza siphoned off millions of dollars of international aid. The egregious corruption, which now came at the expense of people who were suffering from the earthquake, sickened all but the hardest pro-Somoza population. The Sandinistas became strong enough in 1974 to stage a bold raid of a Christmas party being held for the U.S. ambassador. Although he had already left the party, the Sandinistas held other guests hostage, including Somoza's brother-in-law. They held out for more than three days, demanding as ransom the release of fourteen political prisoners (including future Sandinista president Daniel Ortega), \$1 million, and the reading of an antigovernment message on radio and television. Somoza accepted the demands but subsequently responded with harsher repression. The Sandinistas, however, had proven they were a force to be reckoned with.

Between 1974 and 1979, Somoza's moderate opposition was pushed ever closer to support for the Sandinistas, despite the latter's more avowedly radical stance. Anti-Somoza sentiment increased further in 1978 with the assassination of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, a prominent Nicaraguan newspaper editor. Chamorro had been vocal in criticizing Somoza but was moderate compared to the Sandinistas, and his murder demonstrated that Somoza was unwilling to allow any opposition at all.

The Carter administration underestimated the political deterioration in both Nicaragua and El Salvador. Shortly after President Carter took office, the State Department held a meeting to analyze Central America, inviting members of the academic community. They predicted that Somoza would be able to withstand the Sandinistas and that the guerrilla movement in El Salvador would not be a major problem. Robert Pastor, who was Carter's Latin America expert on the U.S. National Security Council, writes that the

FSLN appeared so weak that Somoza's main problem seemed to be his obesity, as he weighed 267 pounds when Carter took office.⁹ As the guerrillas gained momentum, the administration scrambled to respond to events. Although Carter would admonish Somoza for human rights violations, the FSLN charged that it did so only when Somoza appeared stronger, in order to minimize the weakening of the regime.

Ultimately, U.S. policy toward Nicaragua in the late 1970s bore a striking resemblance to U.S. policy toward Cuba in the late 1950s. In both cases, the regime of a corrupt dictator with a history of U.S. support began to collapse under its own bloated weight of repression and greed. Both Somoza and Batista faced revolutionary forces with a distinctly anti-U.S. ideology (openly Marxist-Leninist for the Sandinistas), and as a result U.S. policy makers, hoping to control the flow of events, sought a negotiated solution whereby the dictator would step aside but the rebels would not assume power. In reality, there was no mythical middle ground. In both Cuba and Nicaragua, that solution was unworkable in practice and therefore rejected by all sides. As the revolutions moved closer to success, the Carter and Eisenhower administrations both placed pressure on the dictators, hoping to force them out and maintain some influence in the formation of a new regime. In both countries, the United States was ultimately compelled to accept the demands of the revolutionary forces, and then it would soon turn to measures undermining those new governments. As Pastor writes, "The ghost of Cuba past, which had haunted U.S. policy makers as Somoza was falling, continued to taunt them after the Sandinistas marched into Managua."¹⁰

Facing the inevitable, the Carter administration instructed Ambassador Lawrence Pezzullo to arrange Somoza's resignation and to fly him to Miami. (He was later forced to seek sanctuary in Paraguay, where he was assassinated the following year.) The Sandinistas took power with wide support and their coalition proclaimed a "Plan to Achieve Peace" that on paper was the very model of moderation. The plan would reconstruct the Nicaraguan political system without vengeance and would include "all sectors of Nicaraguan politics." Initial relations with the United States proved laden with suspicion, no surprise given the longtime U.S. support for the Somoza dictatorship. During 1980, the U.S. Congress debated and finally approved an aid package, but the Marxist leanings of the Nicaraguan revolution, which included relationships with Cuba and the Soviet Union, created steadfast political enemies not only in the United States but also in Nicaragua. Many within the Nicaraguan government, however, continued to hope that a *modus vivendi* could somehow be worked out, so that socioeconomic reforms (including nationalizations) could be made without making an enemy of the United States. The 1980 election of Ronald Reagan, however, made any such arrangement impossible. Power, which President Carter had often worked (often unsuccessfully) to keep secondary in policy, once again took center stage.

Box 7.2 “Plan to Achieve Peace” of the Nicaraguan Junta of National Reconstruction (1979)

Our premise is that while it is true that the solution to Nicaragua’s serious problem, is the exclusive competence of the Nicaraguan People. Hemispheric solidarity, essential for this plan to take hold, will be accorded in fulfillment of the Resolution of the Seventeenth Meeting of consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the OAS, approved on June 23, 1979.

The following steps will ensure the immediate and definitive replacement of the Somoza regime. Already destroyed by the heroic and combative people of Nicaragua and their vanguard, the Sandinista national Liberation Front. Rejection of this plan in favor of a political solution would leave military destruction of Somocismo as the only recourse; this could go on for weeks and would lead, unnecessarily, to many more deaths and destruction.

STAGES OF THE PLAN

- I. Somoza submits his resignation to his Congress, which in turn accepts it and turns over the reins of power to the Government of National Reconstruction in recognition of the backing it has received from all sector of Nicaraguan society.
- II. Installation of the Government of National Reconstruction. This Government is made up of representatives of all sectors of Nicaraguan politics and has received the official support of all.
- III. Immediately after the Government of National Reconstruction has installed itself in Nicaragua, the member countries of the OAS, especially those that sponsored or voted in favor of the Resolution, will then recognize it officially as the legitimate Government of Nicaragua.
- IV. The Government of National Reconstruction will immediately do the following:
 1. Repeal the Somoza Constitution.
 2. Decree the Fundamental Statute, which shall provisionally govern the Government of National Reconstruction.
 3. Dissolve the National Congress.
 4. Order the National Guard to cease hostilities and immediately confine them to barracks with the guarantees that their lives and other rights will be respected. The officials, noncommissioned officers and soldiers of the National Guard that so desire may join the new national army or civilian life. The Sandinista Army will enforce the ceasefire to facilitate

fulfillment of these agreements by maintaining the positions won as of the time of the Decree.

5. Maintain order by means of those sectors of the National Guard which have honored the ceasefire and were appointed to these functions by the Government of National Reconstruction, a task that they will carry out in coordination with the combatants of the Sandinista Army.
6. Decree the organic law that will govern the institutions of the State.
7. Implement the program of the Government of National Reconstruction.
8. Guarantee the departure from the country of all those military personnel, Somoza's functionaries who wish to leave and who are found not to have been involved in serious crimes against the people.

Source: <http://www.cidh.oas.org/countryrep/Nica81eng/intro.htm>

President Reagan and Central America

President Reagan took office in January 1981, and criticisms of President Carter's Central America policy had been an important part of his campaign. The most important issues were the perception that Carter had allowed a pro-U.S., anti-Communist ally (Somoza) to fall to Communist rebels; that he was not active enough in countering similar rebels in El Salvador; and that the president had given away the Panama Canal. His famous quote was, "We built it, we paid for it, it's ours, and we're going to keep it." A new "get tough" attitude was immediately apparent, and it resonated with many U.S. voters. Carter had noted in a 1979 speech that the United States suffered from a "crisis of confidence," and many people responded—especially in the wake of defeat in Vietnam—to Reagan's call for an invigorated foreign policy. The Cold War raged on, and given Central America's proximity it became prominent in Reagan's speeches. From a realist viewpoint, protecting the United States from threats was absolutely essential.

The new administration's view of foreign policy was perhaps best summed up by an article written by Jeane Kirkpatrick, a conservative Republican whom Reagan appointed U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. She wrote a much-cited article criticizing the Carter administration for its bungling of the Nicaraguan crisis, and she also addressed Iran, where an Islamic revolution overthrew the U.S.-backed Shah.¹¹ Her main argument was that in some countries there is no alternative to dictatorship and therefore the

United States should not aim or claim to produce one. This echoed the Mann Doctrine. Kirkpatrick asserted there are two types of dictatorships: authoritarian and totalitarian. The former includes autocrats like Somoza, who are repressive but friendly to the United States. The latter often represent Communism, which is not only hostile to the United States but also worse for its own citizens because it is more repressive. She wrote that Carter and his supporters were duped into believing Sandinistas' claims about being a popular voice, when in fact they were the leading edge of a Communist wave. The answer, then, was to support even distasteful dictatorships if they found themselves under attack by guerrillas and to take decisive action against so-called revolutionary governments.

Within two months, Reagan ended the aid program to Nicaragua and also approved a covert plan to fight the Sandinistas. His rationale was that Nicaragua, with the help of Cuba, was funding a revolutionary guerrilla movement in El Salvador, the Farabundo Martí Liberation Front, or FMLN (like the FSLN, it was named for the leader of a past uprising, in this case one that occurred in 1932). The FMLN was fighting a U.S.-supported government in El Salvador that was becoming notorious for its violence. From the U.S. perspective, both movements represented dominoes falling to Marxism-Leninism and by extension Soviet domination. Under this new policy shift, the fact that both were the result of long-standing socioeconomic divisions and political alienation tended not to register. At the very least, conventional wisdom was that Communists were taking advantage of difficult situations that otherwise would have peaceful (and pro-U.S.) solutions.

El Salvador had been controlled for many years by an elite civilian-military coalition, which became more militarized in the 1970s. In 1980, government agents murdered Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero as he said Mass, and later the same year four U.S. nuns were also killed. One militia group had even issued pamphlets saying, "Be a patriot! Kill a priest!"¹² Throughout the 1980s, the human rights record of the government was abysmal, but the U.S. government insisted it was making progress and, at the same time, was dealing with the challenge of fighting Communists, so deserved some leeway. Approximately \$5 billion in aid would flow into El Salvador, accompanied by the assertion that if the FMLN were to win, human rights would be abused even more, so support for the military government could be viewed as the "least bad" policy.

The U.S. answer for Nicaragua was the formation of an anti-Communist rebel army, popularly known as the Contras (a shortened version of the Spanish word for counterrevolutionary; *contra* means "against"). The Contras began as a ragtag force (receiving some money from the approving Argentine dictatorship) of former National Guard officials, but ample funding and CIA training made it into an effective force. In 1981, Reagan approved \$19 million to support approximately 1,000 soldiers, and then in 1982 the Contras blew up two bridges in northern Nicaragua, which

was the first major assault. From then on, the Reagan administration committed itself to the cause, while the Sandinistas were pushed even more firmly into the arms of Cuba and the Soviet Union as they pursued aid and arms deals.

The revolution had not begun in the same radical manner as in Cuba, but after Reagan took office the incipient signs of hardening became increasingly evident. This included a larger security force, the arrests of members of the opposition and censorship of their publications, alienation and resettlement of indigenous groups (who were believed to be potential counterrevolutionaries), and more strident rhetoric against the United States. The Sandinistas were, however, also trying to follow the Cuban model of fostering greater equality and social justice in a country where such ideals had never existed. With Cuban help, literacy rates increased, and for those “within the revolution” there existed the continued hope that Nicaragua could raise itself out of the mire of poverty and dependence, made worse by the destruction and rubble in Managua and elsewhere, a daily reminder of a bitter past.

The revolutionary government embarked on a series of reforms, with the state taking immediate control of Somoza’s vast holdings. Agrarian reform provided land to peasants, while new health and education policies were launched to address the dire needs of the poor. The Sandinistas immediately received aid from Cuba, which included teachers (1,500 arrived in 1979, with more to come), construction workers, and military advisors (Cuba claimed in the mid-1980s that there were 200, the United States believed it to be around 2,000, and a Cuban army general who defected said it was 300 to 400), and nonmilitary aid reached almost \$300 million by 1982.¹³ The Cuban presence was therefore significant, while Soviet–Nicaraguan relations remained relatively cool. In general, the USSR was wary of entangling itself in risky revolutionary wars so close to the United States, and so the Sandinista leadership did not develop friendly ties with the Soviets.

The Reagan administration’s insistence that the Sandinista government be toppled led to one of the most famous U.S. political scandals of the twentieth century, the so-called Iran–Contra affair. The scandal erupted because many members of the U.S. Congress were becoming concerned about reports filtering in from Nicaragua that detailed corruption, drug trafficking, and terrorism by the Contras. In response, in 1982 the Boland Amendment passed (its sponsor was Massachusetts Democratic Representative Edward Boland), which cut off all funding intended to overthrow the Sandinistas. However, this prohibition was easy to evade, as the Reagan administration simply asserted that money was being used to stop the flow of arms to El Salvador and not to topple the Sandinista regime. To close the loophole, Congress passed a second Boland Amendment in 1984, which forbade providing any military aid at all to the Contras.

Intent on keeping the military aid spigot open, officials in the administration, led by National Security Council staff member Lt. Col. Oliver North,

devised schemes to have other countries send funds. Contributors were both private donors and governments, including El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Israel, Panama, Saudi Arabia, and Taiwan. Already skirting the law, North bounded well over it when he approached Iran, offering U.S. weapons (at inflated prices) with the proceeds going to the Contras. Iran was one of the most vocal adversaries of the United States, and indeed part of Jimmy Carter's defeat in 1980 was due to criticism surrounding the U.S. hostages taken by the revolutionary and militant Muslim government in 1979. Nonetheless, the Reagan administration had already been involved in trading arms for hostages with Iran, so the Contra deal was just a new step in the same direction.

Latin American Opponents to the War

As fighting in Central America raged, a number of Latin American leaders came together to find peaceful solutions. In 1982, Mexican President Miguel de la Madrid brought together officials from Colombia, Panama, and Venezuela to Contadora Island, off Panama. This Contadora group eventually also included Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Uruguay and was intended to demilitarize the conflicts while acknowledging the concerns of all sides. Although it offered a peace plan in 1983, the United States rejected it, and so did the Sandinistas. Nicaragua's foreign minister refused to negotiate with the Contadora group, saying, "We don't talk to puppets, only to puppeteers."¹⁴ The Reagan administration claimed that no such agreement was possible in practice, because the Sandinistas could not be trusted to hold up their side of any bargain. Total destruction was the only option.

Nonetheless, opponents of the wars did not give in easily. The most notable was Costa Rican president Oscar Arias Sánchez, who worked assiduously through the 1980s to end the fighting; for his efforts, he would eventually be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. His desire to end the war did not mean he supported the Sandinistas themselves; as he bluntly told Sandinista President Daniel Ortega in 1986, "What you call democracy isn't called democracy here nor in any part of the world."¹⁵ But he also believed that because there was no chance the Contras could ever become a legitimate government, then the war itself did nothing more than destroy the country.

Arias took the basic model of the Contadora plan and in 1987 presented a new peace plan that was signed by the presidents of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. This was known as the Esquipulas II Accords, named for the Guatemalan town where the accords were signed. ("Esquipulas I" referred to a summit meeting of Central American presidents the year before.) It called for ceasefires, amnesties for political prisoners, and free and fair elections. The Esquipulas II Accords would provide the necessary framework for a workable peace process.

The Reagan administration did not support any of those negotiations, as it insisted that only military action could counter the Communist surge. In 1983, the president created a commission to analyze the situation in Central America, chaired by former Secretary of State Kissinger. Not surprisingly, this U.S. National Bipartisan Commission on Central America issued a report the next year supporting the president's current plans of action. Although it acknowledged the dire need for economic assistance and alleviation of poverty and for protecting human rights, its main policy suggestion was to increase military aid. It did not specify how the former goals could be pursued with the latter solution.

Box 7.3 U.S. National Bipartisan Commission on Central America (Kissinger Commission, 1984)

Perhaps the United States should have paid more attention to Central America sooner. Perhaps, over the years, we should have intervened less, or intervened more, or intervened differently. But all these are questions of what might have been. What confronts us now is a question of what might become. Whatever its roots in the past, the crisis in Central America exists urgently in the present, and its successful resolution is vital to the future....

The international purposes of the United States in the late twentieth century are cooperation, not hegemony or domination; partnership, not confrontation; a decent life for all, not exploitation. Those objectives must be achievable in this hemisphere if they can be realized anywhere. ...

First, the commanding economic issue in all of Latin America is the impoverishment of its people. The nations of the hemisphere—not least those of Central America—advanced remarkably throughout the 1960's and 1970's. Growth was strong, though not nearly enough was done to close the gap between the rich and the poor, the product of long-standing economic, social and political structures. ...

Second, the political challenge in the hemisphere centers on the legitimacy of government. Once again, this takes a particularly acute form in Central America. ...

A comprehensive effort to promote democracy and prosperity among the Central American nations must have as its cornerstone accelerated "human development."

Widespread hunger and nutrition, illiteracy, poor educational and training opportunities, poor health conditions, and inadequate housing are unstable foundations on which to encourage the growth of viable democratic institutions. ...

We ardently wish that there was no need for a security chapter in a report on Central America. But there is. . . . We have stressed before, and we repeat here: indigenous reform movements, even indigenous revolutions, are not themselves a security concern of the United States. History holds examples of genuine popular revolutions, springing wholly from native roots. In this hemisphere Mexico is a clear example. But during the past two decades we have faced a new phenomenon. The concerting of the power of the Soviet Union and Cuba to extend their presence and influence into vulnerable areas of the Western Hemisphere is a direct threat to U.S. security interests. This type of insurgency is present in Central America today.

Soviet policy in this hemisphere has followed the pattern of Soviet policy elsewhere in the world: Moscow has exploited opportunities for the expansion of Soviet influence. In the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Soviets concentrated on expanding their diplomatic, economic and cultural ties in Latin America and on strengthening the influence of local Communist parties in broad electoral fronts, trade unions and the universities. In this respect they differed from Castro, who continued to support a course of armed struggle in Venezuela, Colombia, Guatemala, and several other countries. But later the fall of Allende in Chile and the subsequent right wing takeovers in Uruguay, Argentina and Bolivia discredited the Soviet expectation of the "peaceful path" to communism in Latin America.

Beyond the issue of U.S. security interests in the Central American-Caribbean region, our credibility worldwide is engaged. The triumph of hostile forces in what the Soviet call the "strategic rear" of the United States would be read as a sign of U.S. impotence.

The commission has concluded that the security interests are importantly engaged in Central America; that these interests require a significantly larger program of military assistance, as well as greatly expanded support for economic growth and social reform; that there must be an end to the massive violation of human rights if security is to be achieved in Central America; and that external support for the insurgency must be neutralized for the same purpose. . . .

Source: *The Report of the President's National Bipartisan Commission on Central America*: 2, 11, 12, 81, 100-101, 105-106, 111, 125. Available at http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNABB526.pdf

The conclusions of the Kissinger Commission's report stood in contrast to the opinions of many Central Americans. Aside from the efforts of Oscar Arias, there was other opposition to a continuation of the military solution, especially from the religious community. Catholic priests spread the news of Contra-sponsored violence, which included murder, rape, and destruction of

property. As one Spanish priest wrote, "The innocent blood of Christ's sisters and brothers cries out from the earth of Nicaragua."¹⁶ Many Catholic clergy contradicted the more conservative Vatican view and became advocates for the lower classes, especially in El Salvador. The ideas of liberation theology, which exhorted Christians to fight against injustices and to be more active in politics, became very prominent. That pitted them against the government. In El Salvador, the murder of Archbishop Romero underlined the tension between repressive governments and the clergy. Priests were often labeled as either subversives or Communist dupes as they worked to advance the cause of the poor.

Within the United States itself, there was also movement at the grassroots, especially through the religious communities of numerous denominations that protested U.S. policy toward Central America. The movement reached upwards of 100,000 people in the 1980s, and they were able to mobilize effectively because they tapped into existing church resources and infrastructure. As one analyst of the movement argues, "President Reagan's Central American policy so deeply violated the sense of right, of justice, of decency of so many U.S. citizens, that they believed they had no choice but to do whatever they could to defeat it."¹⁷ These groups had an independent impact on congressional voting, and their lobbying efforts forced the Reagan administration to expend more political capital to maintain aid.

The Future of the Panama Canal

In addition to the civil wars in Central America, there was also the tangle of relations with Panama and the future of the canal. Although Carter bore the brunt of criticism for "losing" the canal, the idea of negotiating an end to the 1903 Panama Canal Treaty had in fact already been accepted during the more conservative Nixon administration. In 1974, the U.S. secretary of state and the Panamanian foreign minister had agreed to a set of principles that would recognize Panamanian sovereignty and jurisdiction, while the United States would continue to manage and protect the canal. Reagan (at the time governor of California) allied with other Republican conservatives such as North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms to denounce any such talks.

Panama's president, General Omar Torrijos, was persistent. For him, the matter revolved around sovereignty or, more specifically, its absence. Nationalist and leftist, Torrijos used the canal issue to consolidate support at home and to pressure the United States. The specter of riots in Panama hovered over the Nixon and Ford administrations and prompted them to take Torrijos seriously. In 1973, when Panama had a temporary seat on the Security Council, Torrijos himself had worked at the United Nations to bring international attention to the canal, though the United States eventually vetoed the effort to force a U.S.–Panama meeting. Torrijos also threatened

to expand Panama's relationship with Cuba. As a result, Panama, despite its dependence on the United States, forced the larger country to the negotiating table. At certain times even small countries can exert some leverage and do so to further their own national interests.

President Carter was sympathetic and set up a team to work with the Panamanians. By mid-1977, two separate treaty drafts were completed and signed. The first set December 31, 1999, as the last day of U.S. control over the canal, with joint control of operations (and profits) in the meantime. The second stipulated that, even after 1999, the United States would have the right to "guarantee the neutrality" of the canal, meaning use military force if any country tried to seize it. Torrijos resisted the second treaty, but the agreement would not gain the necessary two-thirds vote in the U.S. Senate without it. In March and April 1978, both treaties successfully passed the Senate by a vote of 68–32, and a generation later, the canal was firmly in Panamanian hands.

For Reagan, the treaties symbolized everything wrong with Democrats and the Carter administration in terms of being soft in foreign affairs, but they were signed, sealed, and delivered. In 1981, U.S.–Panamanian relations became even more complicated when Torrijos was killed in a mysterious plane crash and his former head of intelligence, General Manuel Noriega, took over. Noriega was well known to the United States as an ally in the fight against the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. The serious drawback was that the U.S. government had known from the early 1970s that he trafficked in drugs, especially cocaine. As long as the Contra war raged, it was easy to look the other way, but by the mid-1980s President Reagan had announced a domestic "war on drugs," and the Boland amendments meant that Noriega's services were no longer needed. Congressional attention—even by conservatives who approved of his participation in the Contra war—turned to his drug trafficking. The consequences of that shift later led to invasion during the administration of George H. W. Bush.

The Reagan administration viewed Central America as a primary battleground of the Cold War, where every effort should be made to counter Soviet and Cuban influence. As Reagan pointed out in a 1983 address before a joint session of Congress, U.S. influence globally was at stake in Central America:

If Central America were to fall, what would the consequences be for our position in Asia, Europe, and for alliances such as NATO? If the United States cannot respond to a threat near our own borders, why should Europeans or Asians believe that we're seriously concerned about threats to them? If the Soviets can assume that nothing short of an actual attack on the United States will provoke an American response, which ally, which friend will trust us then?¹⁸

The domino effect had thus taken on a new hue. Not only could Communism spread northward, but also failure to take action would lead to consequences with friend and foe alike.

A report issued jointly by the Departments of State and Defense in 1985 echoed the same sentiments, but focused more directly on the Soviet desire to take advantage of Central American political turmoil:

The Soviet Union sees in the region an excellent and low-cost opportunity to preoccupy the United States—the “main adversary” of Soviet strategy—thus gaining greater global freedom of action for the USSR. ... Working through its key proxy in the region, Cuba, the Soviet Union hopes to force the United States to divert attention and military resources to an area that has not been a serious security concern to the United States in the past.¹⁹

The Reagan administration used the domino theory as a rationale to invade the tiny Caribbean island of Grenada in 1983. Although Grenada is not part of Latin America—given its British roots—the invasion’s purpose was to counter Cuban influence. Operation Urgent Fury overthrew a leftist government that was openly friendly with Fidel Castro, a relationship that deepened as the government came to see that U.S. invasion was a serious threat. One justification for the invasion was the construction of an air strip, which the U.S. claimed was being built to accommodate Soviet jets. The government responded that it was being built to accommodate large planes carrying tourists, and indeed it would later be used for that purpose. A second justification was the perceived need to protect U.S. medical students in Grenada. The United States easily ousted the government and thereby sent a clear signal to other small countries that might seek to ally themselves with Cuba.

The End of the Cold War and the Bush Administration

Reagan’s vice president, George H. W. Bush, was elected easily in 1988, riding the wave of the incumbent president’s popularity. U.S. foreign policy toward Central America in the 1980s had been disastrous for that region and very divisive within the United States, and Bush came to office with the goal of resolving longstanding issues, especially with regard to guerrilla war and revolution. Because the Cold War was winding down, there was less of an ideological charge to his rhetoric and policy toward the region. From a realist perspective, the demise of the primary adversary suddenly meant that military force was no longer automatically necessary in the context of civil war.

Almost immediately, Bush sent his new Secretary of State James Baker to Congress to discuss ways to pull out of Central America. He told Speaker of the House Jim Wright, “We want to wind this thing down. ... We are willing to substitute negotiations for military action.”²⁰ This “winding down” was intended to be gradual, with nonmilitary aid to the Contras continuing. By providing

such aid, the Bush administration felt it could appease hardliners within the Republican Party while pressuring the Sandinistas to keep up their side of the Esquipulas agreements.

In 1990, the Sandinistas agreed to free elections and their candidate, Daniel Ortega, was voted out, a surprise for the FSLN, which believed it would win a majority. The winner was Violeta Chamorro, widow of a newspaper editor murdered by Somoza's forces twelve years earlier. The FSLN integrated itself into democratic politics, fielded candidates, and articulated its positions vis-à-vis the political opposition. Thus, by the early 1990s procedural democracy, whereby elections and not coups bring leaders to power, was appearing in Central America after decades of war.

The civil wars in El Salvador and Guatemala were also coming to an end, with all sides exhausted. Despite elections in El Salvador during the 1980s, the military trumped civilian power behind the scenes. In 1989, the FMLN guerrillas launched what would be their final offensive and the government retaliated with a new wave of repression, even killing six Jesuit priests and two women on a university campus, which shocked even the most ardent anti-Communists in the U.S. government. The priests were well known to some members of Congress, which, combined with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, created new support for a negotiated solution, though the Bush administration was slow to pursue that option. Eventually, the U.S. Congress began to cut El Salvador's aid and the United Nations sponsored peace talks. In December 1991, those discussions yielded an agreement whereby a formal ceasefire would go into effect in early 1992. As in Nicaragua, the FMLN positioned itself as a political party in the new democratic political system.

In Guatemala, the aftermath of Arbenz's overthrow had been political violence that by early 1960 became civil war, with military-dominated governments (supported by the United States) fighting guerrillas and killing alarmingly high numbers of civilians, to the point that it was later labeled as genocide. Facing serious economic problems, the military agreed to allow elections in 1984, which restored civilian rule. Democracy got a boost in 1993, when the president attempted to dissolve Congress and seize dictatorial power (in a so-called *autogolpe* or "selfcoup"), but widespread opposition prompted the army to force his resignation. With the Cold War fading into the past, new peace talks were encouraged by the United States and even more vigorously by the United Nations and Mexico, and in 1996 a peace agreement was finally signed with the rebels, ending thirty-six years of horror. By official counts, the war had left 200,000 dead.

However, one Central American leader did not benefit from the resolution of Cold War hostilities. Ironically, despite his avowed interest in ratcheting down U.S. policy, President Bush did invade a Central American

country, something President Reagan had never done (at least not with U.S. soldiers). The target was Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega, who had outlived his usefulness to the United States. He had supported the Contra cause, but once his services were no longer required, he became a liability. His ties to drug trafficking were well known, as were his violations of human rights. In addition, candidate Bush had been dogged during the campaign by what came to be called the “wimp factor” in the U.S. press, and the use of force was perhaps one means of putting that image to rest. Naturally, Noriega denied all the charges and in his memoirs grandly said, “All I sought was independence for Panama, I thought Panama had the right to its own sovereignty and the right to break free of ‘the chains of colonialism.’”²¹

Even late in the Reagan administration, the U.S. Department of Justice filed indictments against Noriega in federal courts that accused him of allowing Panama to be a transshipment area for drugs. That would be followed by calls to Noriega to resign, economic sanctions, and covert operations with his opposition to launch a coup.²² Despite an attempted coup, all these efforts failed to force him out, thus pumping life into the “wimp factor.” Drug trafficking constituted a threat to the United States, and protection of the Panama Canal was also important; although it was not as central to global trade as in the past, many U.S. policy makers preferred not to risk dealing with a hostile Panamanian president. In that sense, realist theory offers a useful guide to understanding the invasion. But the decision to intervene was also very much an intermestic issue based on Bush’s desire to avoid looking weak domestically and concerns about the advancement of the “drug war.” If, as the administration had claimed, this dictator was a drug smuggler, then why was the U.S. not taking immediate steps to deal with the problem? What finally precipitated invasion, however, was the time-honored justification of the protection of U.S. citizens. In December 1989, a jeep carrying U.S. soldiers was fired on, leaving one dead. That was the final straw, and Operation Just Cause was launched.

There was little resistance, and U.S. troops quickly secured the country. Noriega managed to escape to the papal grounds, where he hoped to be protected by the Vatican’s neutrality. For nine days he was surrounded, while the U.S. soldiers used various means to convince Vatican officials to hand him over, which included not only diplomatic entreaties but also playing loud rock music in his direction (such as “I Fought the Law and the Law Won”). In January 1990, negotiations finally yielded Noriega, who was sent to Florida to face trial. Ultimately he was convicted and sentenced to forty years without possibility of parole in a federal prison. The sentence was eventually reduced to 17 years for good behavior, at which time he was extradited to France and convicted of money laundering. The French government sent him back to Panama in 2011 to serve

time for human rights. The U.S. invasion was deeply unpopular internationally, viewed as yet another example of unilateral and indiscriminate use of force.

Through the 1990s, Panama's economy grew at a steady pace, though entrenched poverty, income inequality, and unemployment remained unresolved. Free elections did become the norm, as did resistance to voting any president to office for more than one term, a legacy of Noriega's abuses. But the trafficking of drugs—which was, after all, the stated justification for the invasion—soon resumed unabated or even increased, undeterred by the absence of Noriega himself. Conspiracy theorists had argued that the invasion was a way for the United States to reverse the canal treaties, but in 1999 they were put into effect as planned. The U.S. presence was scaled back dramatically without any ill effects, a notable and in many ways unexpected success in U.S.–Latin American relations.

Summary and Conclusion

The Cold War proved to be very hot in Latin America, and it dominated U.S.–Latin American relations. The United States government focused squarely on national security while international institutions remained weak in comparison. That follows realist theory assumptions, while the assertions behind liberal institutionalism had yet to flower. The Cold War was very destructive and hundreds of thousands of Latin Americans died, often in almost unimaginably horrible ways, as the wars raged. Many were killed at the hands of their own security forces, which were intent on eradicating anything and anyone resembling “Communism,” a nebulous term that could be used as a rallying cry to target even proponents of mild economic or political reform. For those dedicated to the cause of anti-Communism, the deaths were an inevitable and perhaps necessary part of achieving “victory.” War involves casualties, the argument went and, paradoxically, the dictatorships supposedly protected democracy. Their proof was that by the 1990s every country except Cuba had experienced elections, and Communism was in utter disarray. They could proclaim “mission accomplished,” just as Chilean General Pinochet did when he left power in 1990. When all was said and done, the forces of “good” had won.

The use of power for the stated goal of protecting the state loomed large in U.S. policy. Relations with Latin American countries were viewed largely in terms of security, which lent a convenient rationale to virtually any policy, covert or overt. For opponents of the wars, there could be no justification for the damage they caused. Particularly in Central America, critics noted how dependent those countries had been on the United States for so many years, and how that dominance had permanently and negatively imprinted itself on those countries.

Many of the dictatorships used Communism as an excuse to kill political enemies and left in their wake a legacy of fear and national psychological scarring. However, in the face of the U.S. military strength, international actors were able only to blunt some of its worst effects, not eliminate them. Meanwhile, the living victims and the families of the dead were hurt beyond repair, while U.S. governments had looked the other way or even openly and actively encouraged the violence. South American dictatorships had been egregious violators of human rights, but the worst damage was in Central America, where civil wars had not only killed many but also left already weak economies in a state of collapse.

The end of the Cold War did convince many U.S. policy makers that negotiated settlements—especially in Central America—were finally palatable, but it did not mean an end to conflict in Latin America, as other issues jumped to the fore. Fidel Castro remained in power, the legacies of human rights violations remained highly salient, the drug trade was booming, the quest for markets and trade was stronger than ever, and populism was on the horizon. Latin American immigrants still streamed to the United States, and even later the attacks of September 11, 2001 raised the stakes of terrorism even higher. There were also new political challengers coming from the left of the spectrum. It is to these topics that this book now turns.

Notes

- 1 Quoted in Kornbluh 2003, 79.
- 2 Kornbluh 2003, 82.
- 3 Haslam 2005, 68–69.
- 4 Kornbluh 2003, 94.
- 5 National Security Archive website.
- 6 McSherry 2005, 97.
- 7 Quoted in Beschloss 1997, 174.
- 8 Woodward 1999, 206.
- 9 Pastor 1987, 49.
- 10 Pastor 1987, 192.
- 11 Kirkpatrick 1979.
- 12 LaFeber 1984, 222.
- 13 Dominguez 1989, 176–77.
- 14 Quoted in Woodward 1999, 282.
- 15 Quoted in LeoGrande 1998, 508.
- 16 Quoted in Cabestrero 1985, 4.
- 17 Smith 1996, 168.
- 18 Reagan 1989, 155.
- 19 Quoted in Bermann 1986, 283.
- 20 Quoted in LeoGrande 1998, 554.
- 21 Noriega and Eisner 1997, 208.
- 22 Crandall 2006.

Further Sources

Books

- Grandin, Greg. *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War*, updated edn (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2011). Using Guatemala as a case study Grandin makes the case that the Cold War pitted two different visions of political development against each other. Latin American visions of social democracy contrasted with U.S. views of security threats that require a militarized solution.
- Kornbluh, Peter. *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability* (New York: New Press, 2003). Based on newly declassified documents (many of which are reprinted after each chapter), the book is a riveting account of the U.S. role in promoting the 1973 coup in Chile and then supporting the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet.
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Websites

- CNN Cold War Series, Episode 18: Backyard, 1954–1990.** This website accompanies a CNN video series on the Cold War and focuses on Central America. It includes interviews with key figures, copies of Oliver North's emails, interactive multimedia and maps, and several CIA documents. <http://web.archive.org/web/20081210013042/http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/episodes/01/>
- Chile Documentation Project.** The National Security Archive, a nonprofit organization dedicated to declassifying critical documents related to U.S. foreign policy, has a collection of documents related specifically to Chile, particularly to policies toward the Allende government and then the subsequent dictatorship. http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/latin_america/chile.htm
- Understanding the Iran-Contra Affairs.** Brown University researchers created the only website dedicating to understanding the Iran–Contra scandal. It includes videos of hearings, documents, profiles, timelines, and other information about

the scandal's development. http://www.brown.edu/Research/Understanding_the_Iran_Contra_Affair/

Group of 77 at the United Nations. The official website of the Group of 77. The site contains documents such as key declarations (dating back to its creation in 1964), public statements, speeches, and other links that highlight its ongoing economic programs. <http://www.g77.org/>

The Public Papers of President Ronald W. Reagan. The Reagan Presidential Library is located at the University of Texas, and its website contains a large number of speeches and papers from his administration. They are arranged chronologically, though a search engine is being installed. <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu>

Free Trade and Neoliberal Reform

Timeline

1982	Mexico announces default; beginning of “debt crisis”
1985	Baker Plan announced
1989	Brady Plan announced
1994	NAFTA goes into effect
1994	First Summit of the Americas held in Miami
1995	MERCOSUR goes into effect
2001	Argentina announces default
2003	Chile joins NAFTA
2005	Hemispheric summit rejects the FTAA
2007–2009	CAFTA is ratified
2011	Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement is reach
2012	U.S.–Colombia FTA goes into effect

After the U.S. Civil War, Latin American economies became increasingly tied to the United States. Latin American exports to the United States increased, as did the number of U.S. businesses looking southward for profit. Dollar diplomacy referred to the strong links between the foreign policy interests of the U.S. government and the interests of U.S. investors around the turn of the twentieth century. Theodore Roosevelt’s corollary to the Monroe Doctrine asserted that U.S. troops could be sent as a police force to take over Latin American finances when international debts required payment. Especially in the first third of the twentieth century, Central America and the Caribbean experienced various forms of occupation that

involved U.S. control over finances. Despite President Franklin Roosevelt's era of the "good neighbor" in the 1930s and early 1940s, certain realities were setting in.

First, U.S. investment increased dramatically, with U.S. businesses operating many different types of industries, especially the primary products essential to Latin American economies, such as oil, copper, fruit, sugar, coffee, tin, and rubber. Second, as the twentieth century progressed, Latin American countries depended on U.S. markets for their exports. For dependency theorists, this was an era during which core-periphery relationships became firmly established. Third, when those countries took on debt, it was often through either the U.S. government or private banks in the United States.

Through a realist lens, power was manifesting itself in different ways. As in the past, the United States viewed Latin American economic stability in security terms. Instability bred revolt and invited foreign intervention, both of which were anathema to U.S. interests. However, the days of simply sending troops to deal with debt were ending, to be replaced over time by a new era of economic restructuring under the watchful eye of the United States and international monetary institutions that exerted pressure. By the twenty-first century, Latin American policy makers would find few alternatives to the dominant neoliberal economic model being promoted by the United States. However, they did not remain docile in seeking such alternatives.

Crisis of the Import Substitution Industrialization Model

As discussed in Chapter 4, beginning in the mid-twentieth century most Latin American countries experienced significant state intervention in the economy, pursuing some version of import substitution industrialization (ISI). The state played an integral role, joining businesses in joint ventures or in some cases creating fully state-run industries. These ventures were intended to respond to the failures of the free market, and in many cases state-owned enterprises were in fact formerly failed private investments.¹ High tariffs protected these industries from foreign competition.

By the early 1970s, however, the model was in crisis. The tariff walls had protected domestic enterprises, but reduced the incentives to compete globally because the state would shield them from competition. That combination fostered inefficiencies. It also had no effect on poverty and income inequality; if anything, they became worse. The ISI model was aimed at increasing the internal consumption of domestic goods, but a large majority of the population of Latin American countries simply did not have the income to participate. In addition, the agricultural sector was neglected. Investment was shifted toward industry, sometimes to such a degree that

countries became net food importers, relying on foreign trade to feed their populations.

Latin American governments were, of course, acutely aware of poverty. To address it, they increased social spending and also embarked on infrastructure projects. “Economic populism” refers to political leaders redistributing wealth to targeted populations with the ultimate goal of generating political support. Although such programs did provide much-needed services to the poor, the increase in government spending also fueled inflation, because the largely uncontrolled influx of money into the economy had the effect of raising prices.

The Debt Crisis

Yet even more problematic was ISI’s contribution to Latin American debt. Because the state continued to shore up failing businesses while also funding social programs, it borrowed to make up the shortfall, and the 1970s was a propitious decade for borrowing. The key actor was the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), an eleven-member organization of oil exporters, two of which (Ecuador and Venezuela) are in Latin America. (Most are in the Middle East and North Africa.) OPEC had worked to raise oil prices by limiting production, which brought enormous profits. Seeking investment opportunities for these profits, many OPEC countries put money into banks in the developed world—money that became known as petrodollars. In turn, these banks (including many large U.S. banks such as Bank of America) needed to find ways to pay back the interest. Lending to Latin American governments appeared to be the perfect solution. Those governments were seeking new loans to continue financing their large state projects, so it seemed an excellent match.

In the mid-1970s, interest rates were low in the United States, so the risk involved in borrowing appeared to be minimal. Beginning in 1978, however, the United States raised the interest rate to fight its own problem with inflation by encouraging U.S. citizens to save rather than spend or borrow. Latin American governments were thus faced with repaying interest at the same time that revenues from the ISI model were declining and they were paying very high prices for imported oil. State-led enterprises were not profitable, tax collection (as always) was uneven and rife with corruption, and social spending—often military spending as well—continued to climb. The only way to finance the debt was by borrowing more. As long as the already debt-ridden Latin American countries could continue paying by incurring more debt, the system was safe. But it required the money to continue flowing unabated, because national production was insufficient to get out of the debt trap. It was very much like a pyramid scheme, where profit can only continue if new money keeps coming in.

As the Cold War wound down and most Latin American dictatorships handed power to civilians in the 1980s and 1990s, there was already a strong focus on free trade, buttressed by the United States and international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Proponents argued that strong links existed between free trade, prosperity, and democracy. Free market capitalism would promote investment, eliminate wasteful government spending, reduce corruption, increase transparency, and expand individual freedoms. Many Latin Americans, however, were skeptical. Was free trade the answer to the region's problems?

The Debt Crisis and Mexico

In the 1970s, Mexican presidents struggled to combat the simultaneous problems of debt, inflation, poverty, and the exhaustion of the ISI model. President Luis Echevarría (1970–1976) attempted to break away from ISI and open the economy more to foreign investment, but this merely made Mexico depend even more on multinational corporations and did not reduce debt. Only discovery of new oil fields served to postpone the crisis; oil was a commodity that international lenders were happy to finance.

As long as oil prices remained high, the situation remained stable for Mexico, but in 1981 prices suddenly dropped. The United States and Great Britain had been exploring for new sources of oil, and finally had succeeded in creating a global surplus that prevented OPEC countries from maintaining high prices. At the same time, the United States was experiencing a recession, so U.S. consumers did not buy Latin American goods (or any other goods) as much. The flow of petrodollars slowed, and oil-producing countries could no longer rely on what had seemed like a perpetual source of income. Capital flight—an outflow of money from a country as investors try to jump off what they believe is a sinking ship—became rampant in Mexico. The revenue that for years had been constantly financing debt dried up, and in August 1982 the Mexican government announced that it was incapable of paying off \$83 billion due that month. It was near bankruptcy.

Of course, the announcement spread like wildfire to international banks, which would also go bankrupt if Mexico did not pay. It was certainly not the first time Latin American countries had faced a debt crisis: the Roosevelt corollary to the Monroe Doctrine had been based on the proclivity of European countries to extract repayment by force in the nineteenth century, and the Great Depression had also been disastrous. One important difference, however, was that until the post–World War II period, most lenders to Latin America were governments, not private banks. The crisis of the 1980s threatened large-scale consequences, and diplomatic negotiations would not suffice.

The Reagan administration's reaction was to arrange for emergency loans, partly from the U.S. Treasury (\$1.8 billion) and partly from the International Monetary Fund (\$3.85 billion), that could keep the Mexican economy limping along. As part of the deal, the private banks were compelled to continue lending to a certain degree simply to keep Mexico afloat as the repayment schedule was established. The cost of receiving such assistance eventually became high. In what would become known as structural adjustment, the Mexican government was required to make sweeping economic reforms. The term "adjustment" was an understatement, because it entailed cutting government expenditures (including social services), increasing prices for goods the government supplied, doing away with ISI by privatizing many industries in which the state was an investor, promoting an export industry, and inviting greater foreign investment. More fittingly, such austerity measures took on the popular name "shock therapy." The more precise economic term is "stabilization."

These actions did bring down inflation and improved Mexico's balance of payments, but the overall effect was dismal. Poverty rates increased, because not only did the state cut jobs, but it also raised the cost of getting essential goods and services when subsidies ended or were chopped. Throughout the economy, wages decreased while the cost of food rose. More people were unemployed or worked outside the official economy, and more Mexicans also looked to the United States for jobs. The economy stagnated, and periodic crises (such as a devastating earthquake in Mexico City in 1985 and another drop in oil prices the following year) fostered another cycle of borrowing and restructuring.

This scene soon played out in other Latin American countries, because the bubble burst everywhere. As banks panicked over Mexico, their decreased willingness and ability to continue lending elsewhere brought the large Latin American economies to their knees, as Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, and even smaller, more stable countries like Costa Rica and Uruguay also went before the United States and the IMF to work out repayment. Given that each country was on the brink of economic disaster, the leverage of international actors was high, which in turn prevented Latin American leaders from joining together in any type of debtor coalition or union. Separate negotiations tended to favor the banks and left each individual country with little leeway to refuse conditions. This type of control ties well to dependency theory. The only source of capital is the developed world, which can dictate the terms of debt.

The 1980s are commonly dubbed the Lost Decade in Latin America. Economic growth flatlined, the ranks of the poor grew, wages could not keep up with prices, government spending on many social programs evaporated, and domestic businesses went bankrupt. Not until the 1990s would most Latin American countries begin to enjoy renewed economic growth.

Meanwhile, the power and influence of the IMF and the World Bank expanded. The IMF in particular would become a clearinghouse for new loans, so that if its demands were not met, Latin American governments could not even receive private loans. Feeling burned by the debt crisis, multinational banks were comfortable having the IMF place certain conditions before the loans would be approved. Later, the IMF admitted that at least in some cases it made mistakes that led to making economic crises and poverty worse.

The early 1980s reflected a period of “muddling through,” as the United States made ad hoc decisions without any coordinated plan. That would change by the mid-1980s. For example, the World Bank’s role became more prominent in 1985 as a result of the Baker Plan (named after U.S. Treasury Secretary James Baker), which focused on overseeing the process of moving to an export-led economic plan. The World Bank’s emphasis was always on development, so it effectively teamed with the IMF to coordinate new projects that would be funded by private investors instead of the state in order to foster long-term “structural adjustments.”

Table 8.1 shows the debt explosion. The period between 1980 and 1985 saw tremendous debt growth, but notably it decreased in a few countries even as plans went into effect to alleviate it. Much of the debt renegotiation was aimed more at creating more favorable terms rather than reducing the total amount.

This was followed in 1989 by another shift in strategy by Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady (the Brady Plan), who worked to provide greater options for debt relief, especially through debt swapping, enabling Latin American countries to exchange their existing loans for bonds carrying lower interest rates or face values. For Mexico, this reduced debt to U.S. banks by \$48.5 billion and cut annual debt payments by \$3 billion between 1989 and 1993, whereas under the Baker Plan Mexico’s debt had been reduced only by \$1.1 billion.² Deals worked out under the Brady Plan would continue into the twenty-first century.

The Curious Case of Chile

Chile offers a different glimpse into the tension between the ISI model and free market capitalism. It is a critical case because the country’s radical shift away from state-led development offers insights into the benefits and pitfalls of economic reform. After World War II, the Chilean economy was not unlike those of other Latin American countries. It depended heavily on a primary product—copper—while it attempted ISI, though U.S. firms dominated the copper industry. Also like other countries, it increased government spending, especially on public works projects, financed in part through foreign loans. By the time Salvador Allende was elected president in 1970, the ISI project

Table 8.1 Total External Debt in Latin America, 1980–2012 (\$ billions)

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2012
Argentina	27.16	49.33	65.0	101.46	155.02	113.52	141.13
Bolivia	2.34	3.29	3.77	4.78	4.46	4.94	6.28
Brazil	70.56	105.13	122.2	159.26	216.92	169.45	312.9
Chile	11.2	20.4	18.58	25.66	37.18	45.01	117.78
Colombia	6.8	14.06	16.7	26.34	36.13	38.35	78.64
Costa Rica	2.2	4.14	3.7	3.26	3.15	3.63	14.47
Dominican Republic	2.17	3.72	4.3	3.99	3.68	6.75	12.87
Ecuador	4.17	8.11	11.86	13.93	13.22	17.24	15.9
El Salvador	1.18	1.98	2.22	2.17	2.83	4.98	12.12*
Guatemala	1.05	2.69	2.6	2.11	2.64	3.72	6.82*
Honduras	1.39	3.03	3.48	4.24	4.71	5.08	4.84
Mexico	50.7	97.8	98.2	164.01	148.65	127.09	229.03*
Nicaragua	1.82	4.94	8.65	10.25	6.66	5.35	4.289
Panama	2.97	4.76	5.7	5.89	5.6	7.58	10.78*
Paraguay	0.86	1.77	1.76	1.74	2.87	2.76	3.77
Peru	9.59	13.72	17.35	33.36	27.98	28.6	58.83*
Uruguay	2.14	4.9	7.38	5.32	8.89	11.44	21.07*
Venezuela	29.61	34.3	33.01	37.54	36.44	47.23	115.49

*Statistics changed drastically from 2006 report to 2013 report.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, *Publicaciones Estadísticas*, http://estadisticas.cepal.org/cepalstat/WEB_CEPALSTAT/PublicacionesEstadisticas.asp?idioma=c

was exhausted, burdened by debt and inefficiencies. The economy would subsequently be further rocked by U.S. efforts to destabilize it.

Chile is a curious case because of the decisions made by the military government that came to power after Allende was overthrown in 1973. The generals were certainly not economists, and for several years they presented no clear picture of their economic program. The turning point came in 1975, when influential civilian members of the government proposed a radical change. Because some had been educated in the Department of Economics at the University of Chicago, they were dubbed the Chicago Boys. Like their mentors, the Chicago Boys believed that free markets were the best way to foster economic development. This core belief reached an almost messianic level: if the state retreated as much as possible from the economy, then prosperity would follow. They shared this vision with many U.S. economists and policy makers alike, who applauded their efforts.

General (and soon to be self-proclaimed president) Augusto Pinochet only gradually came to embrace the free market model, which ran counter to the economic policies of previous decades in Chile. A year after the coup, the regime's economic policies were not working, and the Chicago Boys were placed in key governmental positions. By 1975, with the increased cost of oil, falling prices for copper, rising inflation and interest rates, and high unemployment, Pinochet agreed to a "shock treatment" for the economy.³ This entailed deregulation, lower taxes, the removal of price controls, reduction in the number of public employees, suspension of wage increases, privatization of many enterprises nationalized during Allende's presidency, the cutting of tariffs, and the slashing of government spending. The "shock" fell on the poor and even parts of the middle class, who saw their jobs and subsidies disappear. Inflation plummeted, and Chile's budget deficit dropped, but unemployment and poverty rose.

What makes the Chilean case even more curious is that free market reform occurred while Chile's main export—copper—remained in state hands. President Allende had nationalized U.S.-owned copper companies, which had played a role in those firms encouraging and even funding his overthrow. For nationalist reasons, as well as knowing a ready source of cash when it saw one, the military government, for all its orthodoxy, decided to maintain control over copper. The Chicago Boys did, however, diversify Chile's exports so that copper no longer represented such a vast share.

The Chilean model became the blueprint for the Washington Consensus, which emerged at the end of the 1980s. In the view of U.S. policy makers, Latin America's economic failures were due in large part to the role of the state, which had been a central aspect of the ISI model. The best strategy, then, was to make permanent the current strategies for debt repayment. In other words, the rest of Latin America should follow the Chilean example by cutting the size of the state, opening up the country to foreign investment, and placing a high priority on exports. It was, in short, an update of classic

liberal models, a “neoliberal” economic model paying homage to the economic theories of Adam Smith.

By the early 1990s, most U.S. policy makers agreed that a focus on private enterprise and reduced state presence was the best solution for Latin America. The Latin American reaction was decidedly mixed. There were certainly investors, businesses, and banks that benefited from neoliberal policies. Opponents tended to be unions, grassroots organizations, nationalists (who decried the power of the U.S. dollar), and activists of various stripes who lamented the policies’ effects on the poor, women, indigenous groups, and others who found life under neoliberalism to be a daily struggle. All countries also experienced a similar dilemma when trying to copy some of Chile’s policies, which was that Chile had undergone its economic restructuring during a dictatorship; protests were either suppressed or, in the rare moments when they were allowed to occur, were controlled and closely monitored. That would be much more difficult in a democratic setting.

The Rise of Free Trade

Reducing the role of the state was not the only goal of the Washington Consensus. Part of economic reform would include free trade, meaning the dismantling of protections intended to favor domestic industry over foreign investment. The most visible obstacles to free trade are tariffs, the taxes imposed on foreign goods coming into a country, though there are many others, such as subsidies, whereby a government provides economic assistance to targeted industries. Advocates of economic liberalization argued that free trade would increase productivity (once exposed to foreign competitors, businesses would be forced to work more efficiently) and increase job growth. A rising tide could therefore raise all boats, as the average worker would find more opportunities.

Opponents of free trade used the same arguments that dependency theorists had offered after World War II. Because the global distribution of wealth had not changed, then the wealthier countries would benefit disproportionately from free trade. Latin American countries would suffer as foreign investors, no longer blocked by legal obstacles, would swoop in and take advantage of poor workers, who would have little or no recourse. Import substitution had aimed at building up domestic industries, and free trade would tear it all down because large multinational corporations would dominate the economy. Even if imperfect, ISI had provided certain protections and free trade would erase them.

Further, there were additional aspects to free trade that critics were concerned about. As the United States International Trade Administration says on its homepage, “Trade Agreements reduce barriers to U.S. exports, and protect U.S. interests and enhance the rule of law in the FTA partner country.”⁴ Realist theory is grounded in the notion that states protect their interests, and so trade becomes another part of that calculation. In practice,

this can include rules on intellectual property rights, exemptions to certain regulations (such as use of certain chemicals), and even investor protection (such as the ability to sue a government), which clearly favor U.S. interests. The hard push for free trade is framed in terms of a rising tide that lifts all boats, but the largest boat seeks to gain the most.

For the time being, however, these distress calls were largely ignored. The Cold War was ending, and many politicians and economists were proclaiming the victory of free market capitalism. Those who argued against it were dismissed as naysayers or socialist dinosaurs. Nonetheless, their voices were not drowned out entirely, as the case of NAFTA demonstrates.

The North American Free Trade Agreement was the brainchild of Mexican President Carlos Salinas (1988–1994), a U.S.-educated political leader who had come to the conclusion that there were no other options for economic recovery. Given the strength of the executive branch in PRI-dominated Mexico, where Congress was essentially a rubber stamp, he was able to push the proposal through the legislature. Building on an existing economic agreement between Canada and the United States, formal negotiations between the three countries began in 1991, and the agreement went into effect on January 1, 1994. NAFTA's essential aim was to reduce tariffs over time (with longer periods for more sensitive economic sectors) but it also would reduce restrictions on the sale of agricultural goods, strengthen intellectual property rights, establish rules of origin for goods, and eliminate restrictions on foreign investment. Although side agreements were signed to address the issues of labor and environmental protection, they were not included in the agreement's main text. Importantly, NAFTA did not allow for greater freedom of movement for labor, which would be governed exclusively by U.S. immigration law.

During the 1992 U.S. presidential campaign, NAFTA was a high-profile issue. Ross Perot, a wealthy third-party candidate with no political experience, warned of a "giant sucking sound" that would be heard as jobs moved from the United States to Mexico, and this view was widely shared. If U.S. businesses could easily relocate to Mexico, where wages were much lower, then they would quickly take advantage of the opportunity. Evidence for this stance could be found in maquiladoras, the name for assembly plants set up by U.S. companies just over the border in northern Mexico (but also around the Caribbean, Central America, and in some cases even the northern part of South America). All companies needed to do was to assemble a product cheaply a few miles from the border, then quickly transport it back to the United States, where the low cost of production yielded higher profits.

While the U.S. public feared the departure of companies, many Latin Americans were concerned by their arrival. Large corporations threatened smaller businesses that could not compete. This worry was also tinged with nationalism, because those corporations would be based in the United States, with all net profits heading back to the country of origin. Even if jobs were produced, how much would Mexico and Latin America benefit?

Box 8.1 North American Free Trade Agreement (1994)

PREAMBLE

The Government of Canada, the Government of the United Mexican States and the Government of the United States of America, resolved to:

- STRENGTHEN the special bonds of friendship and cooperation among their nations;
 - CONTRIBUTE to the harmonious development and expansion of world trade and provide a catalyst to broader international cooperation;
 - CREATE an expanded and secure market for the goods and services produced in their territories;
 - REDUCE distortions to trade;
 - ESTABLISH clear and mutually advantageous rules governing their trade;
 - ENSURE a predictable commercial framework for business planning and investment;
 - BUILD on their respective rights and obligations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and other multilateral and bilateral instruments of cooperation;
 - ENHANCE the competitiveness of their firms in global markets;
 - FOSTER creativity and innovation, and promote trade in goods and services that are the subject of intellectual property rights;
 - CREATE new employment opportunities and improve working conditions and living standards in their respective territories;
 - UNDERTAKE each of the preceding in a manner consistent with environmental protection and conservation;
 - PRESERVE their flexibility to safeguard the public welfare;
 - PROMOTE sustainable development;
 - STRENGTHEN the development and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations; and
 - PROTECT, enhance and enforce basic workers' rights;
- HAVE AGREED as follows:

CHAPTER I—OBJECTIVES ARTICLE 102: OBJECTIVES

1. The objectives of this Agreement, as elaborated more specifically through its principles and rules, including national treatment, most-favored-nation treatment and transparency, are to:
 - a. eliminate barriers to trade in, and facilitate the cross-border movement of, goods and services between the territories of the Parties;
 - b. promote conditions of fair competition in the free trade area;

- c. increase substantially investment opportunities in the territories of the Parties;
- d. provide adequate and effective protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights in each Party's territory;
- e. create effective procedures for the implementation and application of this Agreement, for its joint administration and for the resolution of disputes; and
- f. establish a framework for further trilateral, regional and multi-lateral cooperation to expand and enhance the benefits of this Agreement.

Source: OAS website, <http://www.sice.oas.org/trade/nafta/naftatce.asp>

Mexican Resistance: The Zapatistas

Opposition to NAFTA took on an even more militant hue with the Zapatista Army for National Liberation (known by its Spanish acronym, EZLN). Naming itself after the indigenous hero of the Mexican revolution, the EZLN appeared in Chiapas, the southernmost Mexican state, which had a large rural indigenous population, was stiflingly poor, and had little to gain from NAFTA. An intellectual who wore a black ski mask and dubbed himself "Subcomandante Marcos" led this army, which in its first communiqué called for a fight against the Mexican government, which, like its predecessors, was composed of "the same ones that today take everything from us, absolutely everything." Its motto was "ya basta!" ("enough is enough!"). A day after NAFTA came into effect, Zapatista soldiers fought and took over five municipalities in Chiapas, while also proclaiming their message via computers and cell phones, which prevented the government from concealing the conflict. As Marcos would later write in the novel *The Uncomfortable Dead*, the Zapatistas were spurred on by "Fear of the long history of defeats. Fear of becoming resigned and getting used to those accounts where we're always on the minus and divide sides and never on the plus and multiply sides."⁵ Eventually the rebels succeeded in establishing semi-autonomous governing bodies that existed uneasily next to official ones.

The Mexican government offered ceasefires and promises of reform, some of which would not be kept, but free trade marched on. The EZLN, however, was a vivid reminder that there were many losers as a result of these reforms. Many Latin Americans did not believe in either free trade or the neoliberal economic model, and over time some were willing to resort to violent measures if their concerns were ignored. In the specific case of the

Zapatistas, their influence has remained strong at the local level, as they negotiated considerable political autonomy in five regions of Chiapas. Their national reach, however, is weak. They have had more success connecting with social movements outside the country (such as Occupy), which consider the Zapatistas a model and an inspiration.

So has NAFTA been a “success” or a “failure”? The short answer is that it depends on where you look. An evaluation of its twenty years showed that trade between the United States and Mexico increased 522%.⁶ By contrast, trade with non-NAFTA countries grew 279%. U.S. foreign direct investment in Mexico grew 564%, from \$15.2 billion in 1993 to \$101 billion in 2012. Since trade was already growing when NAFTA took effect, it is impossible to determine how much is related directly to the agreement and what would have occurred anyway. However, gains in Mexico went only to some states (especially in the north), so that disparities continued or worsened. Trade liberalization also hurt small farmers who could no longer compete with large agribusiness, which meant that emigration soared and income inequality did not change a great deal.

Box 8.2 First Declaration of the Laconda Jungle
of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation
(EZLN, 1993)

TO THE PEOPLE OF MEXICO:

MEXICAN BROTHERS AND SISTERS:

We are a product of 500 years of struggle: first against slavery, then during the War of Independence against Spain led by insurgents, then to avoid being absorbed by North American imperialism, then to promulgate our constitution and expel the French empire from our soil, and later the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz denied us the just application of the Reform laws and the people rebelled and leaders like Villa and Zapata emerged, poor men just like us. We have been denied the most elemental preparation so they can use us as cannon fodder and pillage the wealth of our country. They don't care that we have nothing, absolutely nothing, not even a roof over our heads, no land, no work, no health care, no food nor education. Nor are we able to freely and democratically elect our political representatives, nor is there independence from foreigners, nor is there peace nor justice for ourselves and our children.

But today, we say ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.

We are the inheritors of the true builders of our nation. The dispossessed, we are millions and we thereby call upon our brothers and sisters to join this struggle as the only path, so that we will not die of hunger due to the insatiable ambition of a 70 year dictatorship led by a clique of traitors that represent the most conservative and sell-out groups. They are the same ones that opposed Hidalgo and Morelos, the same ones that betrayed Vicente Guerrero, the same ones that sold half our country to the foreign invader, the same ones that imported a European prince to rule our country, the same ones that formed the “scientific” Porfirista dictatorship, the same ones that opposed the Petroleum Expropriation, the same ones that massacred the railroad workers in 1958 and the students in 1968, the same ones that today take everything from us, absolutely everything.

To prevent the continuation of the above and as our last hope, after having tried to utilize all legal means based on our Constitution, we go to our Constitution, to apply Article 39 which says:

National Sovereignty essentially and originally resides in the people. All political power emanates from the people and its purpose is to help the people. The people have, at all times, the inalienable right to alter or modify their form of government.

Therefore, according to our constitution, we declare the following to the Mexican federal army, the pillar of the Mexican dictatorship that we suffer from, monopolized by a one-party system and led by Carlos Salinas de Gortari, the maximum and illegitimate federal executive that today holds power.

According to this Declaration of War, we ask that other powers of the nation advocate to restore the legitimacy and the stability of the nation by overthrowing the dictator.

We also ask that international organizations and the International Red Cross watch over and regulate our battles, so that our efforts are carried out while still protecting our civilian population. We declare now and always that we are subject to the Geneva Accord, forming the EZLN as our fighting arm of our liberation struggle. We have the Mexican people on our side, we have the beloved tri-colored flag highly respected by our insurgent fighters. We use black and red in our uniform as our symbol of our working people on strike. Our flag carries the following letters, “EZLN,” Zapatista National Liberation Army, and we always carry our flag into combat.

Beforehand, we refuse any effort to disgrace our just cause by accusing us of being drug traffickers, drug guerrillas, thieves, or other names

that might be used by our enemies. Our struggle follows the constitution which is held high by its call for justice and equality.

Therefore, according to this declaration of war, we give our military forces, the EZLN, the following orders:

First: Advance to the capital of the country, overcoming the Mexican federal army, protecting in our advance the civilian population and permitting the people in the liberated area the right to freely and democratically elect their own administrative authorities.

Second: Respect the lives of our prisoners and turn over all wounded to the International Red Cross.

Third: Initiate summary judgments against all soldiers of the Mexican federal army and the political police that have received training or have been paid by foreigners, accused of being traitors to our country, and against all those that have repressed and treated badly the civil population and robbed or stolen from or attempted crimes against the good of the people.

Fourth: Form new troops with all those Mexicans that show their interest in joining our struggle, including those that, being enemy soldiers, turn themselves in without having fought against us, and promise to take orders from the General Command of the Zapatista National Liberation Army.

Fifth: We ask for the unconditional surrender of the enemy's headquarters before we begin any combat to avoid any loss of lives.

Sixth: Suspend the robbery of our natural resources in the areas controlled by the EZLN.

To the people of Mexico: We, the men and women, full and free, are conscious that the war that we have declared is our last resort, but also a just one. The dictators are applying an undeclared genocidal war against our people for many years. Therefore we ask for your participation, your decision to support this plan that struggles for work, land, housing, food, health care, education, independence, freedom, democracy, justice and peace. We declare that we will not stop fighting until the basic demands of our people have been met by forming a government of our country that is free and democratic.

**JOIN THE INSURGENT FORCES OF THE ZAPATISTA
NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY.**

General Command of the EZLN, 31 December 1993

Table 8.2 U.S.–Mexico Trade Before and After Ratification of NAFTA, 1990–2013 (\$ billions)

	1990	1994	2000	2005	2010	2013
Mexican Exports to U.S.	30.16	49.49	135.93	170.11	229.99	280.53
U.S. Exports to Mexico	28.28	50.84	111.35	120.25	163.66	226.08

Source: Bureau of the Census, Foreign Trade Division, <http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c2010.html>

As Table 8.2 demonstrates, Mexico did dramatically improve its trade balance as a result of NAFTA. Within just a few years the two countries went from roughly equal in 1990 to a trade deficit for the United States. Unfortunately, this does not benefit all Mexicans equally.

Critics have also pointed out that much of the burden of free trade falls on women in Latin America and that no trade negotiators study or even address the impact that such agreements have on women. For example, free trade agreements do not provide protections for small farmers in Latin America, many of whom are women. As prices for crops fall, so do their incomes. The same is true for many women who operate small businesses while simultaneously doing most of the work in their own households.

Increasing numbers of women are taking jobs in maquiladoras, to the point that they are a majority of the workforce. However, in the absence of clauses intended specifically to protect women's rights, they consistently receive lower wages and suffer harassment and discrimination. Often owners view them as more compliant and easier to exploit than men. Women's organizations, both in the United States and in Latin America, have protested against poor working conditions and oppose free trade agreements, which they argue will institutionalize discrimination. NAFTA did include a side accord to address labor issues such as nondiscrimination, safety, and collective bargaining. If a member government receives complaints, a trilateral commission can investigate and, through a lengthy process, eventually levy fines or even impose sanctions. Thus far, these mechanisms have been slow and imperfect.

Finally, looking specifically at Chiapas, where the EZLN originated, poverty increased from 75 percent to 78 percent between 1994 and 2013, while nationally the rate dropped from 53 percent to 51 percent in the same time period.⁷ In 1990, 46 percent of people in Chiapas did not have enough to eat, compared to 48 percent in 2013. It remains the most unequal state in Mexico. Unfortunately, neither NAFTA nor the EZLN solved these long-standing problems.

The Free Trade Area of the Americas and Latin American Reactions

Bill Clinton won the 1992 U.S. presidential election and proved himself a champion of free trade, as he helped to begin laying the groundwork for an expansion of hemispheric trade. In 1990, President Bush had announced the “Enterprise for the Americas Initiative,” which envisioned a large trading bloc. In 1994, President Clinton made the vision even more specific when he hosted the Summit of the Americas, a meeting of the heads of state of thirty-four countries (excluding, of course, Fidel Castro) intended to assure Latin America that its economic needs would not be forgotten. The centerpiece of the meeting was the announcement of a “Free Trade Area of the Americas” (FTAA, or ALCA in Spanish). Initially slated to go into effect by 2005, the FTAA’s aim was to open markets across the entire hemisphere. Yet it soon disappeared as leftist governments took office and publicly repudiated it.

This did not mean that free trade itself had died, but rather that agreements were either bilateral or included a relatively small number of participating countries. As Table 8.3 demonstrates, free trade agreements have increased steadily, using NAFTA as a basic operating model. As of 2014 the United States had agreements with ten Latin American countries.

Other initiatives include the Trans-Pacific Partnership, an agreement reached in 2011 (though building on previous trade agreements). It had five core goals: comprehensive market access, a fully regional agreement, engaging in cross-cutting trade issues (including regulation and supply chains), promoting innovative development, and creating a “living” agreement that could be easily updated as needed.⁸ It is a global initiative that originally included Chile, but grew with the additions of Mexico and Peru.

Table 8.3 U.S.–Latin America Free Trade Agreements

<i>Name</i>	<i>Year</i>
North American Free Trade Agreement	1994
U.S.–Chile FTA	2004
Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR)	El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua (2007) Dominican Republic (2008) Costa Rica (2009)
U.S.–Peru Trade Promotion Agreement	2009
U.S.–Colombia FTA	2012

Source: Compiled from information at the Office of the United States Trade Representative, <http://www.ustr.gov/trade-agreements>

The partnership can build on free trade agreements, though it is designed to address issues that go beyond just the movement of goods.

By the mid-1990s, investors had returned to Latin America, and the depression era of the 1980s seemed to have been overcome. In 1992, net transfers of capital showed Latin America receiving more than it paid out for the first time since 1981. Nevertheless, for many Latin Americans the neoliberal model had done little to solve many of the region's most serious problems, such as debt and chronic unemployment.

Rejection of the Washington Consensus: Cuba

In addition to the push for free trade, another high-profile issue was economic policy aimed at Cuba. For a brief time in the late 1980s, it appeared that a thaw with Cuba might be possible. Senior members of Congress (especially Democrats) went on fact-finding trips and made a variety of recommendations, such as engaging the younger functionaries of the Cuban government, writing drug trafficking treaties, and facilitating greater family contacts, all of which would put the United States in a good position when the Castro government eventually fell. These recommendations, however, were often based on the idea that without support from a Communist benefactor, Castro's days were numbered.

Indeed, Fidel Castro was in a real quandary, which only grew worse in 1990 and 1991 as the Soviets ended shipments of subsidized oil, forced Cuba to sell its sugar at market prices, and removed troops from the island. For thirty years, Cuba had relied on the Soviet Union, but suddenly it was adrift in a global economy with no sponsors. In the minds of many U.S. policy makers, there was no way Castro could manage to survive. Despite the calls to expand relations, the more ardent anti-Castro activists had won the ear of President George H. W. Bush, who could not ignore their political influence. Many members of Congress were also willing to listen to the argument that if the Castro regime was on its last legs, then the best plan would be to accelerate that process rather than to accommodate Fidel Castro. One step in that direction was TV Martí, a broadcaster that the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF), an influential and well-funded anti-Castro organization, lobbied successfully to create.

A number of U.S. policy makers viewed the situation as perfect for turning the economic screws even harder and perhaps finally forcing Fidel Castro to his knees. In particular, this meant denying Cuba access to hard currency. New Jersey Senator Robert Torricelli introduced a bill in 1992 that would become the Cuban Democracy Act (CDA). Over the years, U.S. companies had found ways around the embargo, such as creating subsidiaries in other countries that traded openly with Cuba, and the law was

intended to shut off that trade by prohibiting subsidiaries from trading (by 1990, such trade reached over \$500 million). In addition, it blocked any ship that had docked in Cuba from entering the United States for six months. The only “soft” part of the new law was to allow more nongovernmental contacts, such as cultural, academic, and scientific interaction. In late 1992, Torricelli said in a CNN interview that the Castro government would fall within weeks.⁹

President Bush was not enamored of the policy (and in fact had blocked efforts to introduce a similar bill in 1989) because it had the predictable effect of provoking complaints from European allies. However, when candidate Clinton began courting the Cuban American vote and announced his support for the bill, the president did an about face and said he was willing to sign it. At that time, it appeared to be political suicide to oppose such a large and vocal bloc of voters, who clearly had the sympathetic ear of Congress. Clinton even had his own reasons for opposing Castro: in 1980, while he was governor of Arkansas, Cuban refugees from the Mariel boatlift were sent to a military base in his state to be processed. The Cubans rioted, the local townspeople arrived with rifles and clubs, and Clinton blamed his loss in the 1980 gubernatorial election on that episode.

Foreign opposition to the CDA was immediately apparent. The Mexican government made a formal complaint and even issued a statement to U.S. subsidiaries that they should ignore the new law: “It is unacceptable for companies established in our country to try to place a higher value on foreign legislation in Mexican territory than national legislation.”¹⁰ In Latin America, opposition was also expressed by Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The essential contention was that, aside from its effect on Cuba, the CDA was an infringement of sovereignty on countries that did not wish to become enmeshed in U.S. policy toward Cuba. Critics opposed the extension of U.S. law so far beyond its borders.

Nonetheless, when President Clinton took office, he made it clear that significant changes would not be forthcoming. For example, he dumped a nominee (Mario Baeza) for the key Latin America post in the State Department (Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs) when CANF stated its opposition, as well as its annoyance that it had not been consulted first. The administration had not interviewed potential candidates and therefore was unaware of the nominee’s support for trading with Cuba.

In 1994, Republicans took both the Senate and the House of Representatives, which left the Clinton administration even less able to counter congressional initiatives. Emboldened by success, in 1995 Republican Congressman Dan Burton and Senator Jessie Helms sponsored the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, which came to be popularly known as Helms–Burton. The bill had four separate sections, or “titles,” all of them

controversial. Its essence was as follows. First, U.S. companies with property claims in Cuba could sue foreigners who “trafficked” in that property. Second, any foreign business executive who engaged in that “trafficking” would not be granted a visa to enter the United States. Third, any company buying sweeteners (such as sugar or molasses) from Cuba could not sell such products in the United States. Fourth, the United States would decrease its funding to the IMF and World Bank by the amount those institutions gave to Cuba. Fifth, the same would happen to Russia, especially given its operation of an intelligence facility in Cuba. Sixth, the U.S. president was authorized to draw up plans to send aid to Cuba once all reforms stipulated by U.S. law were implemented.

President Clinton opposed the bill, to the point that he and his advisors did the rounds of talk shows and newspapers, arguing that Helms–Burton was unnecessary, given the already stringent elements of the CDA. The political pressure to sign it, however, proved too great, especially after the Cuban exile group Brothers to the Rescue had one of its planes shot down over Cuba by Mig-29 jets. Advocating nonviolent opposition, the organization was attempting to drop leaflets, though the State Department had warned that Cuban retaliation to such activities was highly likely. In the highly charged atmosphere of the Helms–Burton debate, the deaths were framed as symbolizing the intolerance of the Cuban dictatorship. Politically unable to veto the legislation, the Clinton administration instead negotiated to include a waiver provision, whereby the president could impose a six-month waiver if the “national interest” was at stake. The retaliation against Russia could also be waived. Almost like clockwork, every year Presidents since then continue to issue the waiver, citing “national interest” as a way to avoid economic and diplomatic conflict with European allies.

The European Union threatened to take the matter to the World Trade Organization, which has the authority to resolve trade disputes between member countries, but ultimately chose not to pursue the matter. The Clinton administration warned that the United States would resist any infringement on its Cuba policy, so pushing the issue could serve to destroy the WTO itself, which in 1996 was only a year old. President Clinton did promise to use the waiver provision and to “consult” Congress about removing the more controversial aspects of the law. Soon afterward, France signed a trade deal with Cuba, symbolizing Europe’s disdain for U.S. policy.

The Helms–Burton law took control over the embargo out of the White House and made it law, not to be lifted until there were elections and democracy in a Cuba that did not include Fidel Castro. The president does have the waiver power, but control over Cuba policy has shifted significantly toward the legislature. In particular, the president must obtain congressional approval to remove many of the embargo’s components. Congress has the final word on whether Cuba is deemed democratic enough to restore fully normal relations.

Nonetheless, pressures to ease the embargo have gained steam since the 1990s. In addition to groups who believed that the embargo simply exacerbated Cuban poverty without achieving its stated objective, the voices of U.S. businesses joined in. In 1997, approximately 400 companies—including large and well-known examples like Procter and Gamble, AT&T, Boeing, and Pepsico—came together to create USA Engage, a lobbying organization to open up trade and oppose unilateral trade sanctions, especially with Cuba. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and a host of lobbyists for individual industries (especially in agriculture) also called for reform.

In 2002, a bipartisan group of thirty-four members of the U.S. House of Representatives formed the Cuba Working Group, with the goal of easing the embargo and allowing greater freedom of travel. Its membership would grow, averaging around fifty, and a Senate counterpart was launched in 2003 with ten to fifteen senators. In 2014, a group of prominent think tank members and former policy makers—including Republican John Negroponte—released an open letter to President Obama, calling for executive action to facilitate more travel and trade even within the bounds of the embargo. Change has remained very slow and piecemeal, but in December 2014 President Obama announced the reestablishment of diplomatic relations, relaxation of trade and travel, and—as the press endlessly reported—the right for Americans to bring limited amounts of cigars and rum back from Cuba. The embargo remains in place, but it has been cracked.

Restrictions extended even to sports, as in late 2005 the Treasury Department refused to allow the Cuban national team to participate in the World Baseball Classic competition in March 2006 (in 1999, the Cuban team had played—and defeated—the Baltimore Orioles, under a one-day waiver from the Clinton administration). Because one of the issues at stake was whether Cuba would receive any hard currency, Castro offered to donate any proceeds to victims of Hurricane Katrina (which hit the U.S. Gulf Coast in 2005), and the administration relented, but also mentioned that it was concerned that the baseball games would “be used by the regime for espionage.”¹¹

Numerous states (with governors of both parties) sent trade missions to Cuba. They then pressured their representatives in Congress to enact new legislation. These members of Congress began to listen, especially because they had less to fear from the anti-Castro lobby, which was concentrated in only a few states. These efforts bore fruit, albeit meager. In 2000, for example, Congress approved limited sales of agricultural goods to Cuba, though it would not permit any financing in the United States (in other words, the transaction needed to be either in cash or financed by a third country). In this manner, Fidel Castro was able to make the first purchases of U.S. products in decades. In 2013 total exports to Cuba reached

\$349 million, which was even down from a 2008 high of \$710 billion. Given the restrictions, however, more legislation would be required to facilitate large-scale transactions.

Rejection of the Washington Consensus: The Rise of Populism

There was also a reemergence of populism (often called “neopopulism”; the first wave of populism had taken place during the 1930s and 1940s), where newly elected presidents such as Venezuela’s Hugo Chávez (a former coup plotter elected in 1998) blamed capitalism and the United States for his country’s economic woes and income inequality. One useful definition of populism refers to a “top-down political mobilization of mass constituencies by personalistic leaders who challenge established political or economic elites on behalf of an ill-defined *pueblo*, or “the people.”¹² Populists raged against U.S. influence, and often accused their conservative opposition (who were the economic elites) of complicity with the U.S. government. They also criticize that opposition for what it did when it used to hold the presidency, which resonates with so many people who feel they have always been excluded. Populism involves energizing those who never felt the government cared.

Chávez even referred to President Bush as “Mr. Danger.” After Chávez’s death in 2013, his successor Nicolás Maduro took on the anti-U.S. policy mantle. President Bush took a swipe at Chávez in return in his memoirs: “President Hugo Chavez polluted the airwaves with hard-core anti-American sermons while spreading a vision of phony populism that he termed the Bolivarian revolution.”¹³

In the Brazilian presidential elections of 2002, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (known as “Lula”) captured the imagination of the downtrodden, who felt victimized by free market reforms and excessive capitalism. In Ecuador, retired army colonel Lino Gutierrez came to power in 2000 with the aid of the military, which overthrew the sitting president, and he was vocal about protecting the country from neoliberal reforms. The foundation of his support was Ecuador’s indigenous organizations, which then began to desert him, claiming he had failed to help the rural poor and was working too closely with the United States and the IMF. In 2006, Ecuador elected another populist, Rafael Correa, whose platform included unilateral restructuring of the country’s debt.

Bolivian presidential candidate Evo Morales called for an end to U.S.-funded policies to eradicate coca, which he argued was harming the economic prospects for the country’s indigenous population. His sudden surge in popularity in 2003 came at a time when Bolivian president Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada was forced to resign on account of widespread and profound

opposition to his neoliberal policies. These leaders were all tapping into a mine of deep popular discontent. Morales's election in late 2005 served to widen the economic policy gap between South American populists and the United States.

These movements reflect what Eduardo Galeano, a famous and incisive Uruguayan writer, said of Latin American political economy in the 1970s in his book *Open Veins of Latin America*:

[T]he IMF, instead of attacking the causes of the production apparatus' insufficient supply, launches its cavalry against the consequences, crushing even further the feeble consumer power of the internal market: in these lands of hungry multitudes, the IMF lays the blame for inflation at the door of excessive demand. Its stabilization and development formulas have not only failed to stabilize or develop; they have tightened the external stranglehold on these countries, deepened the poverty of the dispossessed masses—bringing social tensions to the boiling point—and hastened economic and financial denationalization in the name of the sacred principles of free trade, free competition, and freedom of movement for capital.¹⁴

Galeano's account runs along the same lines as dependency theory. Core countries and the international institutions they control look to the developing world to ease their economic problems. Without concern for the socio-economic consequences, they force economic reforms deemed more acceptable. Thus, underdevelopment becomes an inevitable outcome of global capitalism. Interestingly, in 2014 Galeano admitted that he did not really agree with his famous book any longer. Even so, it remains an inspiration to many leftist leaders.

Other Latin American leaders faced a dilemma. They could follow the route of Chávez and Maduro (and Castro before them) with fiery speeches denouncing the United States, followed by an aggressively independent foreign policy and anti-neoliberal economic policies, thereby becoming an ideological enemy of the United States. Or these leaders could follow the more moderate path of Lula and Rousseff and attempt to work with the IMF and the United States, thereby potentially alienating their own domestic bases of support.

Embrace of the Washington Consensus: The Case of Argentina

The Argentine case illustrates some of the potential drawbacks to neoliberal reform. After suffering through the 1980s, in the 1990s under President Carlos Menem the country embarked on an ambitious plan to curb inflation and promote the stability of the Argentine peso. To achieve the latter, in

1991 the government decided to peg the peso to the U.S. dollar, a decision that appeared to work very well. Argentina benefited from the dollar's stability and did not have to deal with the common problem of rapidly changing exchange rates, which can wreak havoc on trade. Cracks in the plan appeared in 1999, when Brazil devalued its currency. Suddenly, Argentina's exports to Brazil became more expensive. In addition, Argentina suffered a large budget deficit and a large amount of foreign debt, which were not alleviated by export or tax revenues.

Within several years, Argentina's lack of control over its own monetary policy, such as the ability to devalue in response to shifting economic realities, brought disaster on the country, and it announced in December 2001 that it could not pay its debts. Tying itself to the U.S. dollar had ultimately achieved the opposite of what had been intended, and the growing lack of confidence led investors and citizens alike to start taking their money out of the country.

The Argentine government's response was to blame political corruption and mismanagement, but also inconsistencies in both the U.S. and IMF responses, which, some argued, did not infuse fresh capital into the country quickly enough to forestall some of the worst economic effects. The IMF, meanwhile, insisted that its recommendations had nothing to do with economic implosions in the developing world, and that its main fault was to overestimate Argentina's growth potential while underestimating its ability to enact economic reforms. A senior IMF official joked, "There will always be a need for the IMF as a scapegoat of first resort!"¹⁵ A 2003 study written for the Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress placed the blame on Argentina and the IMF and concluded that the U.S. was concerned about protection of U.S. property rights in the country.¹⁶

Either way, the result was disastrous. By then, Menem was out of office, but Argentina saw several presidents cycle in and then out again in disgrace. Poverty and unemployment skyrocketed, which eventually led to the election of Néstor Kirchner in 2003. Kirchner was in the same mold as other Latin American populists and worked quickly to stabilize the economy and defy the economic policies prescribed by the United States and international financial institutions. Before he took office, Argentina had registered the largest debt default in history (\$95 billion) and Kirchner insisted on lower terms of repayment. That did help the country's finances, but made it much harder to obtain new loans, and years later the government was still continuing arduous discussions about terms of repayment.

Political Economy in the Twenty-First Century

When President George W. Bush took office in 2001, free trade and market reforms had reached juggernaut status. Even the U.S. Congress, which had been deeply divided over the approval of NAFTA, had come to accept the

notion that NAFTA should be expanded. To achieve that goal, President Bush requested and received fast-track authority to negotiate with Chile, which, given its recent economic history, appeared to be the best candidate for expansion of U.S. free trade agreements in Latin America. Fast-track authority refers to removing Congressional power to add amendments to agreements with other countries. President Clinton had acted with fast-track authority for NAFTA, but subsequently had been unable to convince Congress to grant him that power again. One strategy the Bush administration utilized was to change the name “fast track,” with its possible connotations of pulling a fast one on Congress, to “trade promotion authority.” Once fast track/trade promotion authority had been established, the Bush administration worked quickly to incorporate Chile into NAFTA and to establish a Central America Free Trade Agreement. President Obama used the same authority to finalize a free trade agreement with Colombia.

Though at times they have been less than successful, these various attempts at negotiating agreements reflect the undeniable fact that the United States and Latin America are tightly bound together economically. For example, by 2013 over 40 percent of U.S. exports went to the Americas. The U.S. also relies considerably on Latin American countries for oil; nearly 25 percent of U.S. oil is Latin American (a number that has been on the decline). Mexico is the second largest exporter of oil to the United States (Canada is first; Venezuela is fourth, behind Saudi Arabia). In addition, Mexico, Central America, and several Caribbean countries have come to rely heavily on remittances. The United States has even negotiated with Latin American countries and banks to reduce the costs associated with sending remittances.

These ties that bind are also evident in the amount of U.S. foreign direct investment (FDI) in Latin America. In 2012, U.S. companies accounted for just under 25 percent of total FDI in the region, which is down from previous years but still high. As part of economic liberalization programs, Latin American governments began selling off state-owned enterprises, and foreign investors were eager to buy them. Much of the increase of FDI in the 1990s was in public utilities, airlines, railways, steel companies, and other mining enterprises, all of which had historically been state owned. In what sometimes seemed like a return to the past, governments would essentially bid to attract foreign investment.

Latin America has sought other trading partners and sources of investment. China has become a major trading partner, for the most part importing commodities, especially copper, iron, and soy. Chinese President Xi Jinping made a point of visiting different Latin American countries to show his country's commitment to increasing trade, which went from negligible in 2000 to roughly \$250 billion in 2012. China frames its position as preferable to the United States because it does not attach any strings (human rights or democracy, for example) to its trade. The U.S. government has watched this development warily, as it represents the first time since the Cold War that an

extrahemispheric power (and one that has a touchy relationship already) has made such inroads in the region.

The same is true on a smaller scale with India, which in 1997 launched a coordinated strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean (FOCUS LAC). From 2000 to 2013 total trade rose from \$2 billion to \$30 billion. That trade has largely been composed of oil (both fuel and edible) and minerals. In the cases of both China and India, dependency theory offers a mixed analysis. On the one hand, diversification of trading partners reduces reliance on a single developed country, which is a positive development. On the other hand, it does not break dependence on primary goods, which is a central goal of dependency theorists. Selling iron to more than one country may help to yield a higher price (as demand goes up, so does the price), but it leaves you no closer to a diversified economy.

For Latin American policy makers, the effects of all this investment make it worthwhile. It provided several thousand relatively well-paying jobs, but also raised the possibility of backward linkages, where domestic investors could launch their own small businesses to link up with the large foreign firm. Evidence for significant backward linkages has not been easy to find, though it is indisputable that these types of foreign investments have created many new jobs. Nonetheless, working conditions in these jobs have come under scrutiny. Free trade agreements and rules of foreign investment do not necessarily provide safeguards for the workers themselves, who sometimes suffer from excessive working hours, low wages, and unsanitary conditions.

Another critical question with regard to attracting FDI goes back to some of the original concerns of dependency theorists: do these investments provide Latin American countries with a foundation for stable economic growth without the historical menace of foreign domination and control? Commodities still represent a central source of revenue for Latin American countries. The global recession that began in 2008 hit these economies hard, but they rebounded quickly, in large part because of high global (especially Chinese) demand for primary products. In 2013 and 2014 that demand—and therefore also the prices—fell and the outlook for growth became much more muted. Compared to a century ago there are more trading partners, but still an overreliance on what can be grown or pulled out of the earth.

Summary and Conclusion

The 1980s was dubbed the “lost decade” in Latin America. A wave of economic implosions began in 1982, when Mexico announced that it was unable to make its debt payment. All over the region, economies stagnated and millions of people suffered, as they lost their jobs and social programs were cut. The international response, spearheaded by the United States, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, was to initiate market

reforms that would end decades of state-led development. State spending was cut and state-run industries were privatized; tariffs were dismantled and free trade agreements constructed. The neoliberal era had been launched. These developments dovetailed with dependency theory's insistence that the developed world would do what it could to maintain control over the primary products in less developed countries, thereby keeping them in a position of subordination.

The reforms and trade agreements that accompanied this new era reflected continued U.S. hegemony, but also the ways in which economic power was supplanting military power. Military force to collect debt or to force reforms was no longer the policy tool it had been in the past. However, the U.S. view that Latin American economic instability posed a security threat to the United States did remain. Given the tremendous economic imbalance and U.S. leverage, Latin American countries are finding fewer and fewer alternatives to the neoliberal model, given the intense pressure that is brought to bear internationally. Failure to adopt economic reforms can mean bankruptcy. The radical response has been the nascent emergence of leaders who challenge the status quo and resist international pressure to cut the role of the state in the economy. In line with realist ideas, Latin American leaders are also forming economic agreements to balance the power of the United States, which will be the focus of the next chapter.

At the end of the twentieth century, Latin American economies were growing once again, but in many cases were just getting back to where they had been in the 1980s before the crash. Serious and chronic ills such as unemployment, debt, and poverty had not been stamped out by neoliberal reforms, and all too often they had actually worsened. Although the inefficiencies of import substitution industrialization had become apparent, the "Washington Consensus" seemed to offer only drastic change as a solution.

Many Latin Americans are feeling the economic pain and respond through protest and support for populist leaders who promise prosperity and freedom from international influences. This new brand of populism gained tremendous momentum and carries with it a strong suspicion of U.S. economic policies and international organizations. In terms of both U.S.-Latin American relations and political stability, an important question is whether neopopulism can balance the demands of its supporters while working successfully with the international actors it criticizes. This has played out in different ways.

Free trade agreements also proliferated in the latter half of the twentieth century. These efforts were capped by negotiations to create a hemispheric Free Trade Area of the Americas, which fell apart as many Latin American leaders questioned whether they would serve their nation's economic needs. That attitude reflected dependency theorists' argument that resisting U.S. economic dominance was the only way to achieve any real independence.

Research Questions

1. U.S. policy makers and other proponents argue that in the long run neoliberal reforms will promote economic growth and reduce poverty. What is the rationale for this, and how well does it work in practice?
2. How have market-oriented policies affected democratization in Latin America?
3. What are the main pros and cons that Latin American leaders must weigh up when deciding whether to join free trade agreements with the United States?
4. Have there been significant changes in the type of U.S. investment in the past fifty years? What has driven these changes?
5. Analyze the specific costs and gains associated with NAFTA. Who appears to benefit the most, and who appears not to have benefited?
6. To what degree do international organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank affect sovereignty in Latin America? Does this appear to support the arguments of dependency theorists?

Notes

- 1 Franko 2003, 59.
- 2 Franko 2003, 101.
- 3 Loveman 2001, 268.
- 4 <http://www.trade.gov/fta/>
- 5 Taibó and Marcos 2006, 63.
- 6 Villarreal and Fergusson 2014.
- 7 Ríos 2014.
- 8 See Office of the United States Trade Representative website.
- 9 Azicri 2000, 189.
- 10 Quoted in Kaplowitz 1998, 154.
- 11 Curry 2006.
- 12 Levitsky and Roberts 2011, 6.
- 13 Bush 2010, 436.
- 14 Galeano 1997, 221.
- 15 Larsen 2003.
- 16 Schuler 2003.

Further Sources

Books

Bértola, Luis and José Antonio Ocampo. *The Economic Development of Latin America since Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). The authors examine historical trends and demonstrate how inequality—both within

countries and compared to the developed world—has been a major obstacle to economic growth. Also critical are weak institutions and specialization in a small number of products.

- Bulmer-Thomas, Victor. *The Economic History of Latin America since Independence*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). A good historical overview of Latin American economics, beginning with colonial legacies and concluding with the effects of market reforms in the 1990s.
- Cardoso, Fernando Henrique, and Enzo Faletto. *Dependency and Development in Latin America* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979). A translation of one of the most important works on dependency theory. One of the authors (Cardoso) later became president of Brazil and advocated the neoliberal model.
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Websites

- Americas Program.** A website run by the Interhemispheric Resource Center, an independent think tank critical of U.S. policy. Focusing especially on economic issues and trade, it is critical of current policies while also seeking to provide workable alternatives. The website has a large number of analyses, think pieces, policy briefs, and other publications, many of which center on NAFTA. <http://www.cipamericas.org/>
- Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).** An indispensable source of data and reports on all aspects of Latin American economies. It is constantly updated and has a large amount of material in English. <http://www.cepal.org>
- International Monetary Fund.** The IMF website contains reports, analyses, press releases, and press briefings for countries all over the world, dating back to the early 1990s. An easy way to navigate the site is to choose a specific country, which is an option available on the homepage and yields a list of reports in chronological order. <http://www.imf.org>
- MERCOSUR.** The organization's own website, <http://www.mercosur.int>, has only Spanish and Portuguese as language options, but it includes all the relevant documents, meetings, accords, and agreements associated with MERCOSUR. However, another website linked to MERCOSUR is the Mercosur Economic Research Network, funded by a variety of national and international sources. It offers a wide range of working papers and briefs in English that address MERCOSUR's functions as well as its relationship to

other countries and international organizations. http://www.eldis.org/go/home&cid=5882&type=Organisation#.VOTXWfnF_Ak

NAFTA Secretariat. The official website of the Secretariat, which is the dispute resolution center for the free trade agreement. It includes all of NAFTA's founding agreements, a discussion of disputes and their resolution, and even an option to receive email on pending cases and decisions. <http://www.nafta-sec-alena.org/>

Challenges to U.S. Hegemony

Timeline

- 1991** Creation of MERCOSUR
- 1998** Hugo Chávez elected
- 2004** Creation of ALBA
- 2005** Creation of Petrocaribe
- 2005** Telesur launched
- 2008** Creation of UNASUR
- 2010** Creation of CELAC
- 2012** Creation of the Pacific Alliance
- 2014** UNASUR mediates Venezuela crisis

Hugo Chávez assumed the Venezuelan presidency in 1999 and immediately began conceiving plans to counter the influence of the United States in Latin America. The night after his election, he stood on the terrace of a theater in Caracas and proclaimed, “The resurrection of Venezuela has begun, and nothing and no one can stop it.”¹ He saw himself as the heir to Simón Bolívar, who had dreamed in vain of a hemispheric alliance that would exclude the United States and bind the countries of the hemisphere together. Strength could come in numbers. Progress was slow but steady, as a series of organizations—all with different core purposes—came into being, largely with Venezuelan funding.

Remember that hegemony refers to being the most powerful. As we have seen, as it grew economically and militarily in the nineteenth century, the United States gained a hegemonic position in the western hemisphere, which it maintains. This does not mean that the United States is all-powerful or can

dictate what it wants. That is a tempting assumption given how much power the country wields, but the United States simply is not responsible for even many major developments in the region. Hegemony does entail much leverage and so the U.S. government can bring pressure to bear on countries to follow certain policy paths and to accept certain rules of the political game. With the rise of Chávez and other presidents, these rules were challenged more directly than they had ever been before, and many Latin American policy makers tried to write new ones.

The success of these endeavors is not easy to quantify, but they are theoretically rich. Realism views international institutions as largely driven by national interests. Countries with resources will be able to push the decision making in those institutions in their preferred directions. Weaker countries can choose to join, but they can also create new institutions that reflect their different perspective. Without the hegemonic power involved they face a major challenge of making these institutions influential, however, especially if that power opposes their existence. Creation is one thing and effectiveness is another.

Challenges to the strong influence of the United States relate clearly to theory. Many left-leaning governments in Latin America openly use the language of dependency theory to depict their strategy. Joining together within both economic and political institutions that excluded the United States could break the stranglehold of international capitalism and imperial designs. Strategies along these lines include trade agreements, the creation of international institutions excluding the United States, discussions of common currencies, and mutual aid.

Meanwhile, realism posits that countries will choose either to bandwagon (meaning join) with the hegemonic power or to counterbalance, meaning they will join with others in an effort to create more strength with numbers. The core difference between the two in the case of Latin America is the role of the United States. Bandwagoning means remaining closely allied (such as Colombia), whereas balancing is the opposition (such as Venezuela).

Political scientist Javier Corrales has referred to Venezuela's policy as "social power," which means that governments connect to Venezuela as a way to obtain funds that give them more resources for domestic spending.² "Soft power" is a term in international relations referring to how governments use culture in particular to enhance the image of their country and thereby make other governments more likely to be partners than adversaries. "Social power" involves much less of that and more merely targeted spending. It therefore adds a new twist to bandwagoning, because there are enticements that go beyond traditional conceptions of power balancing.

Further, a view from liberal institutionalism would consider the importance of the institutions themselves. Latin American leaders construct them precisely because they believe their rules will become binding, at least to some degree. If nothing else, they can lead to an evolution of the region's worldview, which

can gradually compel the hegemon to make a similar change. At a certain point, if the institutions enjoy a high level of legitimacy among Latin American countries, U.S. policy makers will find it increasingly difficult to ignore or marginalize them. According to this logic, even a hegemonic power must bow down to institutional realities.

The ultimate goal of these various efforts is to establish political and/or economic independence from the United States. That would mean being freed from political interference, economic pressure, violations of sovereignty, or any other type of imposition from the hegemonic power. After two centuries of domination, this represented a monumental undertaking. After over a decade of initiatives, there has been change, but the rhetoric has largely outstripped the real outcomes.

The last chapter addressed populism and neopopulism, concepts that focus on how political leaders—especially on the left—relate to their constituents. This chapter shifts the focus to how leftist leaders (whether populist or not) relate both to the United States and to each other. Before moving on, therefore, we need to ask specifically what we mean by “left,” “leftist,” “left-leaning,” and so on. There is no commonly accepted single definition. This book uses a very basic definition from political scientists Steven Levitsky and Kenneth Roberts, who write that it refers to “political actors who seek, as a *central programmatic objective*, to reduce social and economic inequalities.”³ Almost all governments at least make the claim that they want to reduce poverty, but often do not mention inequality. Reducing inequality requires much more than only addressing poverty, because it requires redistribution from the wealthy to the poor. That sort of reform creates backlash (just think about Guatemala in 1954). Making such reforms a high priority sets leftist governments apart from others. Nailing down what these look like in the real world can be challenging, but the idea is that these politicians are focusing first and foremost on the less fortunate. The strategies used to reduce inequality *may* involve neopopulism, but not necessarily.

Origins of Institutions

Even before the recent rise of democratically elected leftist presidents, especially in South America political leaders created new organizations intended to rival the economic dominance of the United States. The most prominent was the South American Common Market, or MERCOSUR, created in 1991 and currently composed of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Bolivia and Chile became associate members in 1996, as did Peru in 2003, Colombia and Ecuador in 2004, and Guyana and Suriname in 2013. Mexico and New Zealand are official observer nations. Unlike NAFTA, MERCOSUR is also a customs union, meaning it establishes a common external tariff for all member countries.

MERCOSUR has enjoyed some success. Trade between the member countries grew fourfold between 1990 and 2000, though some of that increase may have occurred even without its existence. It has yet to become a full common market, mostly because the task of integration has been hampered by economic crises and lack of consensus. The onset of depression in Argentina in late 2001 left many wondering whether even the minimal amount of integration achieved could be sustained. Given real fears of “contagion effects,” whereby crisis in one country could spread to the others, most fiscal and monetary controls have remained national. Member countries also became mired in trade disputes, particularly between Argentina and Brazil.

Other organizations, like the Andean Pact, which includes Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela, were also created with the goal of having a common market. The Andean Pact dates back to 1969, but received new attention after MERCOSUR came into being. It had largely failed in the past given that its original goal was to establish a common market by 1979. Another example is the Central American Common Market, created in 1960. The dream of Central American unity has yet to become reality, and especially during the Cold War, agreements were difficult to reach. A combination of ideological hostility and economic frailty derailed the project, though renewed interests did emerge in the 1990s. All these emphases on regional organizations were intended to counter U.S. influence by denying U.S. access to them. They could provide collective leverage, a sort of economic safety in numbers.

These examples show that the seeds of balancing against the United States were in place by the 1990s, but they had no individual champion, no single state that acted as guide and promoter to keep up their momentum. Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez was the driving force of the challenge to U.S. hegemony that accelerated in the first decade of the twenty-first century. His election in 1998 became the inspiration for a host of other left-leaning presidential candidates across the region who began winning office. These leaders, such as Evo Morales and Rafael Correa, are frequently popularly characterized as a bloc and often as acolytes of Chávez, but this masks tremendous diversity and independent thinking.

This is a democratic development that is rare in Latin American political history, which is most commonly characterized by conservative governments. Further, in some cases (such as Chile and Guatemala) countries have moved back and forth between presidents who lean more leftward and those on the right, which shows a level of ideological acceptance that is also uncommon. Furthermore, the novelty means that U.S. policy makers have not always been sure how to respond. Table 9.1 shows the elections (and reelections) of left or center-left presidents since Hugo Chávez got the electoral ball rolling.

It is very hard to make generalizations about these presidents because their core ideologies range from centrist to radical left. To make matters even more



Figure 9.1 Hugo Chavez and Dilma Rousseff. Foto: Roberto Stuckert Filho/PR <https://www.flickr.com/photos/48084596@N05/5807834525>.

Table 9.1 Elections of Left or Center-Left Presidents in Latin America, 1998–2014

<i>Year</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>Country</i>
1998	Hugo Chávez	Venezuela
1999–2000	Ricardo Lagos	Chile
2000	Hugo Chávez (reelected)	Venezuela
2002	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva	Brazil
2003	Néstor Kirchner	Argentina
2004	Tabaré Vázquez	Uruguay
2005	Evo Morales	Bolivia
2005	José Manuel Zelaya	Honduras
2005–2006	Michelle Bachelet	Chile
2006	Rafael Correa	Ecuador
2006	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (reelected)	Brazil
2006	Daniel Ortega (reelected)	Nicaragua
2006	Hugo Chávez (reelected)	Venezuela
2007	Álvaro Colom	Guatemala
2007	Cristina Fernández de Kirchner	Argentina
2008	Fernando Lugo	Paraguay
2009	José Mujica	Uruguay
2009	Mauricio Funes	El Salvador
2009	Evo Morales	Bolivia
2009	Rafael Correa (reelected)	Ecuador
2010	Dilma Rousseff	Brazil
2011	Ollanta Humala	Peru
2011	Daniel Ortega (reelected)	Nicaragua
2011	Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (reelected)	Argentina
2012	Hugo Chávez (reelected)	Venezuela
2013	Michelle Bachelet (reelected)	Chile
2013	Rafael Correa	Ecuador
2013	Nicolás Maduro	Venezuela
2014	Salvador Sánchez Cerén	El Salvador

confusing, their own positions often change over time, making labels very slippery. José Manuel Zelaya, for example, campaigned as an establishment candidate, then veered sharply left. Ollanta Humala was widely viewed as leftist while he campaigned, then moderate when he governed. We could quibble endlessly on exactly who should be included in the list (I even quibbled with myself as I created it). However, what they share is a generalized belief that inequality must be reduced, but also that Latin America can and should exhibit more independence in foreign policy. For that reason, all of these presidents are sympathetic to and interested in the creation of regional organizations aimed at promoting unity. They are not necessarily doing so out of hostility toward the United States or suspicion of U.S. policy makers' motives (though that is often present), but more out of a sense of self-interest.

It is all too common but inaccurate to portray this trend as “anti-American.” They are highly critical of the United States in some areas and much less so in others, with continued strong relations at lower levels even while higher-level officials may publicly criticize U.S. policy (or even specific U.S. policy makers). At times their sharp rhetoric is aimed at domestic constituencies and is tempered in private. Many of the leaders who have been critical of U.S. policy in some areas work very well with U.S. presidents in others.

Much of their language is anti-imperial, using the history of U.S.–Latin American relations as a springboard. Would-be reformers began with criticism of the Organization of American States, which had come under fire from leftist governments for its pro–United States tilt. Symbolically, its headquarters are physically located in Washington, DC, the very epicenter of empire (and the money to build it originated with a donation from Andrew Carnegie, who embodied international capitalism).

Over time, several specific issues had raised the hackles of Hugo Chávez in particular, but periodically other leftist presidents as well. One of the most prominent was the continued exclusion of Cuba. In 1962, the OAS suspended Cuba for its efforts toward the “establishment of totalitarian dictatorships at the service of extracontinental powers.”⁴ That referred, of course, to the Soviet Union. In practice this meant that Cuba was still officially a member, but could not be represented until it rejected Marxism-Leninism. After the Soviet Union disintegrated, Latin American leaders periodically raised the issue of reincorporating Cuba, since the original decision had been made in a very different geopolitical context. Hugo Chávez took it up as a cause, so that in 2009 the organization voted to allow Cuba representation. As it turned out, the Cuban government refused to reenter the OAS, saying it was a tool of the United States.

Despite that outcome, Cuba's long-time exclusion at the behest of the United States was emblematic of what many leftists considered the underlying problem with the organization, namely, that it was not a truly independent voice. The United States is the largest funder of the OAS and the organization

has generally acted in ways agreeable to the U.S. government. Creating new institutions would not destroy the OAS, but rather would make it irrelevant and show how it was an object of a different era, when the United States was dominant and the Cold War drove decisions.

ALBA

The earliest example of a new institution is the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America, which originated only with Cuba and Venezuela and so had a socialist flavor. It has since added Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Dominica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Saint Lucia. Hugo Chávez publicly announced the idea in 2001 and ALBA became operational with a signed declaration with Fidel Castro in 2004. It has held numerous summits since its inception, though the concrete trade impact has been slight mostly by virtue of its limited membership.

Box 9.1 Joint Declaration of the Governments of Venezuela and Cuba on ALBA

We affirm that the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) is the most final expression of the appetites for domination over the region and that, if it were to go into effect, would constitute a deepening of neoliberalism and would create new levels of dependency and subordination without precedent.

We analyze historically the process of integration in Latin America and the Caribbean, and affirm that far from responding to the objectives of independent development and regional economic complementarity, it has served as a mechanism for the deepening of dependency and external domination.

We also affirm that the benefits obtained during the last five decades by large transnational corporations, the exhaustion of the import substitution model, the crisis of external debt, and, more recently, the diffusion of neoliberal policies, with greater transnationalization of Latin American and Caribbean economies, and with the proliferation of negotiations to conclude free trade agreements similar to the FTAA, creates the foundation that characterizes the panorama of subordination and backwardness that our region currently suffers. ...

We clarify that for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, integration is an essential condition to aspire to development through the growing formation of large regional blocs that occupy dominant positions in the global economy, an integration based only on cooperation,

solidarity, and a common will to advance as one toward the highest levels of development can satisfy the needs and yearnings of Latin American and Caribbean nations and at the same time preserve their independence, sovereignty, and identity. ...

We affirm that the cardinal principle that must guide ALBA is the broadest solidarity among the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, which is founded on the ideas of Bolívar, Martí, Sucre, O'Higgins, San Martín, Hidalgo, Petion, Morazán, Sandino, and other such great men, without egoistic nationalism or restrictive national policies that negate the objective of creating a Great Fatherland in Latin America, according to the dream of the heroes of our national independence battles.

In that manner, we clearly agree that ALBA will not become reality with mercantilist criteria or egoistic interests of business gains or national benefit that damages other peoples. Only a broad Latin Americanist vision, which recognizes the impossibility of our countries developing and becoming truly independent while isolated, will be capable of achieving what Bolívar proclaimed, "...to see in America the greatest nation of the world, less for its size and riches but for its liberty and glory," and what Martí conceived as "Our America," to contrast it with the other America, with imperial and expansionist appetites.

Source: <http://www.cuba.cu/gobierno/discursos/2004/esp/d141204e.html> (translated by the author)

The purpose of ALBA is to provide a platform for the integration of Latin America and the Caribbean. Its four core governing ideals are solidarity, complementarity, justice, and cooperation. It looks back to the early history of the region when individual nations were being formed, and as an institution seeks to reclaim the ideals of solidarity that Hugo Chávez in particular believed to be prevalent (but never realized) at the time. Both then and now, the strong differences between countries, and especially their perception of their own interests, are a constant challenge for ALBA.

Unlike some of the other newly founded organizations, ALBA has maintained its leftist ideological orientation. Hugo Chávez had the goal of producing a universal currency—the Unitary System of Regional Compensation, or SUCRE—but by and large the economies of participating countries are not strong enough to make that viable. This effort is complicated further by the fact that Ecuador is dollarized and has shown no signs of reverting to its own currency. Nonetheless, ALBA seeks to improve the lives of Latin Americans in a broad range of areas: health, social justice, education, and even culture. Since socialism

remains the bedrock of all policies, however, by definition ALBA's scope cannot expand beyond governments that self-identify as socialist or at least see enough benefit to accept aid and other assistance from socialist countries (as is the case with several small, English-speaking governments in the Caribbean).

Presidents tend to use ALBA as an example of public political unity. During crises, such as unscheduled changes in government or large-scale protests, they give statements to demonstrate how the countries speak in one voice against U.S. imperialism (which is generally viewed as the root cause of the crises). When protests erupted in Venezuela in early 2014, the ALBA countries issued a formal statement to "condemn the violent acts that have taken place in recent days, which are part of a strategy of the international right-wing forces through their local political operators to cause instability in the country and to interrupt the constitutional order against the government of President Nicolas Maduro Moros."⁵ This is the political face of a dependency outlook, as it describes national-level politicians as nothing more than pawns of the United States, whose goal is to keep Venezuela subjugated in large part to maintain access to its oil.

More important are some of the projects ALBA has launched that developed a life of their own, which are outlined below. In particular, TeleSur became a source of anti-hegemonic news programming, and Petrocaribe was a source of cheap Venezuelan oil for a number of countries. Despite the fact that ALBA served as a vehicle for such projects, the funding still originates with the Venezuelan government, so that these projects will face major problems without that assistance.

UNASUR

One of the most ambitious projects was modeled on the European Union and became known as the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). It has a secretariat (located in Quito, Ecuador), legislature, and a bank, and meets annually. Its first Secretary-General, Néstor Kirchner, was elected in 2010. It has twelve members, every country except French Guiana, which as a French territory is part of the European Union. Most importantly for our analysis, UNASUR excludes the United States.

Its constitutive treaty is ambitious, as it lays out a regional vision of democracy, equality, protection of biodiversity, cultural diversity, universal health care, financial integration, and even South American citizenship, with twenty-one specific goals in all. This is in conscious counterpoint to the status quo, which UNASUR's founders believed was tilted in favor of the United States, of international capitalism and of dependency. The entire flavor of the founding document is utopian, a new era dawning that would renew the age-old desire for regional unity and harmony.

Box 9.2 UNASUR Constitutive Treaty**Article 3 Specific Objectives**

- a. The strengthening of political dialogue among Member States to guarantee a space for agreement in order to reinforce South American integration and UNASUR's participation in the international arena;
- b. Social and human development with equity and inclusion to eradicate poverty and overcome inequalities in the region;
- c. The eradication of illiteracy, universal access to quality education and the regional recognition of studies and titles;
- d. Energy integration for the integrated, sustainable use of the region's resources, in a spirit of solidarity;
- e. The development of infrastructure for the interconnection of the region and among our peoples, based on sustainable criteria of social and economic development;
- f. Financial integration through the adoption of mechanisms compatible with the economic and fiscal policies of Member States;
- g. The protection of biodiversity, water resources and ecosystems, as well as cooperation in preventing catastrophes and combating the causes and effects of climate change;
- h. The development of concrete, effective mechanisms to overcome asymmetries, this achieving equitable integration;
- i. The consolidation of a South American identity through the progressive recognition of rights to nationals of a Member State resident in any other Member States, with the aim of establishing a South American citizenship;
- j. Universal access to social security and health services.

Source: [http://www.isags-unasur.org/uploads/biblioteca/1/bb\[158\]ling\[3\]anx\[403\].pdf](http://www.isags-unasur.org/uploads/biblioteca/1/bb[158]ling[3]anx[403].pdf)

When President Barack Obama was invited to attend a UNASUR meeting in 2009, he received an earful. Here is how that was interpreted by a senior administration official:

There was some history raised and some issues of past U.S. intervention in which none of the concerns were directed at the President himself or at his administration, but more a reflection of what one hears in Latin America fairly frequently about the U.S. being interventionist. And the President made the point that he's not here to argue history. He said we need to understand the past, have to move ahead, very forward-looking. He also made a point that, just as the United States has to recognize the past and other countries have to, as well, it's also helpful for Latin America to avoid the temptation, the easy temptation, to blame anything that goes wrong or any problems that exist on the United States.⁶

Given UNASUR's origins, it was not surprising for the president to hear frank criticism. Its very existence was based on the view that, as the hegemonic power, the United States dominated regional organizations to the point that they lost their independent voice. It is hard for the United States to overcome its own foreign policy history.

There is also a defense component. The South American Defense Council met for the first time in 2009. Its purpose is not operational, so, for example, it does not entail the use of soldiers. Instead, it serves as a mechanism to enhance transparency and to encourage cooperation. In 2014 UNASUR also established a South American Defense Institute, which would provide teaching and training to replace U.S.-based schools like the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (formerly the School of the Americas) and others.

UNASUR's independent influence has gradually grown. Its first real test was political conflict in Bolivia. In 2008, four opposition regions declared protests and strikes in response to President Evo Morales' decision to centralize hydrocarbon taxes. The situation very quickly became violent. Accusing the United States of meddling, President Morales expelled U.S. Ambassador Philip Goldberg. Chilean President Michelle Bachelet was President pro tempore of UNASUR at the time and convened an emergency meeting to discuss the crisis. That allowed for a unified declaration, which was in support of the Bolivian government.

In 2010, Ecuador's Rafael Correa also faced serious protests when the National Police went on strike because they believed the government was going to cut benefits. Correa decided to confront the protesting police in person, which exacerbated the situation. In a confusing series of events, he was hustled to a nearby hospital and could not leave for about ten hours. Whether or not this was an aborted coup attempt remains unclear, particularly since the police did not make any specific indications to that effect. After a brief delay, the army declared its adherence to the government and the crisis calmed down. Argentine President Cristina Fernández was president of UNASUR at the time and called a meeting. Representatives quickly issued a statement saying that it was a coup attempt and kidnapping, and that the organization supported the government. The OAS followed a similar process, with the United States affirming its support for President Correa.

Yet UNASUR has influence beyond merely convening meetings and making supportive statements. When protests broke out in Venezuela in 2014, UNASUR became a key player for establishing dialogue between the government and the opposition. The governments of Brazil, Colombia, and Ecuador sent UNASUR delegates to participate in the process, thus demonstrating ideological balance. Critics in the United States argued that UNASUR remained a puppet of the Venezuelan government, and that exclusion of the United States would lead to an outcome unfavorable to U.S. security.⁷ This position is a realist one, casting a suspicious eye on international institutions

in general, but especially those that the United States cannot direct. National interests trump all other considerations, such that no support should be granted to actions undertaken by international institutions until they are thoroughly investigated and deemed to be in line with the goals of U.S. foreign policy.

What we see is a new institution quickly establishing regional legitimacy and becoming a diplomatic player. UNASUR is not dominated by Venezuela, particularly since Brazil has embraced the opportunity to take a more prominent diplomatic position in the region. It is therefore much less ideological than ALBA, which in turn broadens its influence. That fact also means the Obama administration has been on good terms with UNASUR and speaks favorably of it.

CELAC

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States is similar to UNASUR but covers all countries (33 in all), which makes it more akin to the OAS. It is more inclusive than the other examples because it includes the Caribbean and therefore is more clearly hemispheric. The organization was created in 2010 and held its first meeting in Caracas in 2011. CELAC quickly reached out to other regions of the world and created, among other things, a formal connection to the European Union that includes regular meetings, dialogue, and research. Its formal purpose was to replace the Rio Group, which was a loose-knit group of countries founded in 1986 to provide a counterweight to U.S. Cold War policies and to help Latin American countries coordinate responses to key collective challenges they faced.

CELAC's purpose does not go much beyond that. Like ALBA it seeks integration, but more in the agreement on principles than any concrete policies. Without even a hint of irony, the 2014 meeting was hosted by Cuba and concluded with a declaration that included, "Let us strengthen our democracies as well as all human rights for all; let us provide more opportunities for our peoples ..."²⁸ That Cuba is a dictatorship where human rights and opportunities are severely limited by the state went unmentioned. Regardless, CELAC serves mostly as a forum for discussion of broad issues rather than being an action-oriented institution like UNASUR.

The proliferation of regional organizations perhaps augurs well for the promotion of unity, but at the same time they create overlapping rules and responsibilities. As a result, it is likely that some will wither on the diplomatic vine by virtue of duplication. In the United States CELAC tends to be dismissed as primarily a vehicle for the dissemination of anti-U.S. sentiment. Proponents see it as a means of promoting peaceful development in the region and as a sign that U.S. power is on the decline.

Petrocaribe

One aspect of dependency relates to economic aid. In Latin America, when the United States provided aid of some sort, it tended to come with strings attached. Among other things those strings involved a commitment to a market economy and U.S.-style democracy. President Chávez set out to establish a purely Latin American aid regime that would remove those requirements. In 2005 he launched Petrocaribe, which would provide oil at highly subsidized prices to countries in Central America and the Caribbean, which were, of course, also countries that traditionally had been within the U.S. policy orbit. Long-term repayment plans made the venture attractive to presidents in the subregion. There were 14 original members, which by 2014 had grown to 18.

In El Salvador, for example, in 2014 newly inaugurated president Salvador Sánchez Cerén announced the country's formal entrance into Petrocaribe, which had been two years in the making. The terms were that El Salvador would pay half the normal price for oil, with a repayment schedule spreading over 25 years at 1 percent interest. The total cost was \$1.2 billion, so El Salvador would only pay \$600 million. The logic was that the country would be free to invest more in its own social programs without the burden of oil costs. Whether or not such arrangements are sustainable remains an open question. Guatemala pulled out of Petrocaribe entirely in 2013 on the grounds that Venezuela was not in fact willing to fulfill the promise of the low-interest loan. At the same time, Honduras suffered shipment delays and the Dominican Republic received less oil than expected.

From a realist perspective, beyond serving as an alternative to the United States, Petrocaribe also provided Venezuela with a core group of supportive governments in already existing organizations such as the OAS. With those governments seeking to maintain positive relations with a benefactor, Venezuela could count on verbal and even voting assistance when facing criticism from the United States.

A major challenge for any aid program, and even for diplomatic organizations requiring regular funding, is that the Venezuelan economy stagnated, and grew worse after Hugo Chávez died in 2013. Shortages of key consumer goods, inflation, lack of capital, serious currency uncertainty, and other economic maladies make it more difficult for the government to maintain preferential treatment for other countries. Not only is it a financial burden, but politically it becomes harder to make the case to Venezuelans that funds should be shifted away from them in favor of citizens in other countries.

Interestingly, another concern relates to the basic ideas behind dependency theory. Although Venezuela is not a "core" country or a hegemonic power, countries that start relying on its largesse may find it difficult to wean themselves off. Especially as the Venezuelan government faces serious political crisis, many Caribbean political leaders have noted the risk of experiencing a sudden cut of those exports. This scenario is not unreasonable given the

Venezuelan government's need both to channel resources elsewhere and the possibility that a new government would end the program entirely. If there is a drastic shift in funding, then smaller countries in particular will face an unpleasant economic jolt.

The U.S. Response

The U.S. government tends to be ambivalent about institutions created in Latin America. In the 1960s it supported regional economic integration as long as free trade was its core orientation, especially since policy makers feared Communist encroachment and so wished for Latin American governments to do whatever they could to encourage capitalist development. This support waned after the Cold War, because organizations like MERCOSUR were incompatible with the U.S. vision of a hemispheric Free Trade Area of the Americas. Opposition to the FTAA came largely (but not exclusively) from within MERCOSUR.

Once the number of left or center-left governments grew along with the number of new institutions, the U.S. response—particularly during the Obama administration—was cautiously supportive. This is really just acceding to reality, since clearly these institutions will not disappear quickly. Even after receiving criticism from UNASUR, the Obama administration continued rhetorical support for it while simultaneously committing itself to the OAS. For the time being, two different sets of institutions exist in parallel. The United States has come to accept that such an arrangement is inevitable even if perhaps not optimal for its own interests. In other words, those institutions have taken on a life of their own.

New Conceptions of Human Rights

There were direct challenges to existing inter-American institutions as well. One of these was the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which is part of the Organization of American States. Chapter 11 will examine how human rights abuses during the Cold War gave birth to new organizations. The discussion here is intended to highlight the ways in which the issue has become part of an overall counterbalancing project.

In 2012, the Venezuelan government officially denounced the IACHR and pulled out of its court, as President Chávez charged it with being controlled by major powers, obviously referring to the United States. Later the government withdrew its signature from the American Convention on Human Rights. This reaction fits quite well with realism, which would expect states to follow international institutions just as long as they were coinciding with the state's interest.

Organizations that previously had been lauded by leftists, most notably Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, were similarly transformed into villains. In 2008, Hugo Chávez expelled two members of Human Rights Watch who were investigating problems in Venezuela after ten years of his government. The organization became a vocal critic of Chávez and his successor, Nicolás Maduro, as did Amnesty International. In response, the government argued persistently that the reports were overblown and that the “fascist” Venezuelan opposition was responsible for fomenting much of the violence in the country.

Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa gave a speech lauding the history of the IACHR, but criticizing how it was being manipulated by the United States, which in fact was not even a signatory. He argued that the IACHR was starting to impose rules, with the pressure of the United States behind it, and thereby treating sovereign states as subordinates rather than equal partners. That opinion is not the majority, but does represent that of an important minority.

This was a curious mirror image of the Cold War, when right-wing military governments made very similar charges and took similar measures. Dictatorships across Latin America argued that claims of human rights abuses were politically motivated, driven by the left in the United States, and failed to acknowledge how much the opposition was responsible. A realist perspective would not consider this too surprising. States act according to their own interests and if international organizations do not reflect that interest, then they are jettisoned. This has less to do with ideology and much more with self-interest.

Nonetheless, to date the new regional bodies have not created their own human rights commission to act as formal counterweights. In 2013, UNASUR representatives did formally agree that such an action should be pursued, while Ecuador has done the same for CELAC as well. That was part of an ongoing debate about the nature and actions of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which is deemed too ideologically bound to U.S. interests.

Diplomatic Relations

Rejection of U.S. influence also sometimes extends to the presence of diplomatic officials. One tactic that has increased is to expel U.S. officials, which at times even involves ambassadors. By 2014, for example, the United States had no ambassadors in Bolivia (since 2008) and Venezuela (since 2010). The U.S. ambassador to Ecuador was expelled in 2011 and a year passed before a new one was put in place.

Bolivia and Ecuador expelled officials from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Bolivia did the same with the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). Cables leaked by Wikileaks revealed an extensive

program by USAID in Venezuela to work with the opposition.⁹ Ecuador simply cancelled all USAID programs and aid in the country.

The governments of Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro expelled numerous officials over the years, accusing them of subversion and violating Venezuelan sovereignty. In general, the United States reciprocated, expelling the equivalent Venezuelan diplomat from the country. These actions were similar to the ideological tit-for-tat in 1988, when the Sandinista government and the Reagan administration “exchanged” two officials. What they represent is one of the relatively few ways in which Latin American countries can concretely respond to the United States. Nevertheless, this particular strategy is limited only to a few (though very vocal) countries.

Counter-Hegemony and Popular Culture

Formal organizations and diplomatic relations constitute one means of countering U.S. influence, but popular culture is also important. For years, Hugo Chávez had criticized the establishment media both in Venezuela and abroad for its slanted, anti-leftist, pro-United States reporting. One way to combat that was to create an entirely new network that would broadcast across the region. Thus, in 2005 Telesur (which is a Spanish acronym for the New Television of the South) was born. It now broadcasts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with a signal that reaches western Europe and part of Africa in addition to the western hemisphere. Its stated vision is to provide news with a social justice orientation, with the aim of unifying the peoples of the South.

Telesur has been influential, covering stories that can even make Latin American governments uncomfortable. In 2014, the Costa Rican government complained about a story claiming that the United States had built a military base there. Overall, the network has an editorial stance that is highly critical of U.S. foreign policy and favorable to all the new organizations already outlined. Shortly after it was launched, Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) argued in a hearing that Telesur was a vehicle “for anti-American propaganda and for fomenting instability and leftist revolutionary ideology in the region.”¹⁰ It is unclear how much Telesur succeeded in doing what she claimed, but there is no doubt that the United States could not control it and was impotent to do much if anything about it.

Pacific Alliance

Not all hemispheric economic agreements are hostile to the United States. The Pacific Alliance is a free trade agreement between Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru (with Costa Rica and Panama on the cusp of joining) that came into effect in 2012. Beyond merely free trade, though, a stated goal for

the alliance is to “[b]ecome a platform for political articulation, and economic and trade integration, and project these strengths to the rest of the world, with a special emphasis on the Asia-Pacific region.”¹¹ In other words, unlike NAFTA and other FTAs in the region, the Pacific Alliance has a long-term goal of transforming economic integration into a cohesive political voice.

The key difference from the organizations launched by Hugo Chávez and sustained by other governments is that the United States is closely linked to the Pacific Alliance, even though it is not a member. In 2013, the United States joined 31 other countries from across the world as an official observer state. Indeed, it already has FTAs ratified with three of the four members. Given this fact, resistance to joining the alliance will come largely from within the United States itself, where traditional skepticism of FTAs combines with questions about sovereignty given the at least partially political nature of the alliance’s mission. There are other aspects of the alliance that transcend typical FTAs, such as the goal of free movement of people, which also give U.S. policy makers pause. The alliance itself refers to these as “deep integration.”

Domestic Tensions

Leftist presidents were not only challenging traditionally held views of international institutions, they were also rocking the political boat at home. At times those tensions pulled the United States in. The most significant example is the Honduran coup of 2009, but there was also a 2012 crisis in Paraguay. Taken together, these show changes in how the region responds collectively, but also the limitations to those responses.

José Manuel Zelaya took office in 2006. He was a wealthy landowner and member of the establishment Liberal Party whose campaign centered largely on fighting corruption. Once in power he moved leftward ideologically, exemplified by bringing Honduras into ALBA and working with Hugo Chávez. Elites and the military soon joined in opposition to his presidency, an alliance that solidified when Zelaya proposed a referendum to allow discussion of constitutional reform of presidential terms, which were limited to one. Under the Honduran constitution, it is unconstitutional even to formally propose extension of term limits. Although Zelaya had not explicitly done so, his opponents claimed that was his intention. Zelaya pushed ahead with his idea and in response the Supreme Court ruled that he should be removed from power. In June 2009 the army then showed up at his door, whisked him away in his pajamas, and flew him (illegally) out of the country to Costa Rica.

Several months of drama—sometimes confused and bordering on the absurd—ensued. Zelaya snuck back into the country and took refuge at the Brazilian embassy, while interim President Ricardo Micheletti and other elites insisted that the coup was not a coup, and that the country should just wait

until the regularly scheduled presidential election later that year to resolve the issue under new leadership.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated categorically that the removal of power was a violation of OAS principles:

The action taken against Honduran President Mel Zelaya violates the precepts of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, and thus should be condemned by all. We call on all parties in Honduras to respect the constitutional order and the rule of law, to reaffirm their democratic vocation, and to commit themselves to resolve political disputes peacefully and through dialogue. Honduras must embrace the very principles of democracy we reaffirmed at the OAS meeting it hosted less than one month ago.¹²

The Obama administration also eventually agreed that Zelaya's removal qualified as a coup.

The aftermath demonstrates the weaknesses of institutions. The Organization of American States (which suspended Honduras's membership), UNASUR, and even the UN condemned the coup and called for Zelaya's return. Nobel Peace Prize winner Oscar Arias even tried his hand at negotiation. They were completely ignored. Instead, the coup government looked primarily to the Obama administration, which made strong statements in favor of democracy but in practice favored the strategy of waiting out the crisis until elections took place. This was a policy based on realist principles. The U.S. government already viewed Zelaya negatively because of his public support of Hugo Chávez and therefore considered him a political problem for Central America. That indeed was the final outcome, as six months after the coup new elections made Porfirio Lobo, another establishment candidate, the new president.

Latin America was split. The governments of Colombia, Costa Rica, Panama, and Peru indicated they would recognize Lobo's victory, while the rest of the region maintained silence or actively opposed recognition. Further cracks appeared in early 2010 when the leftist government of Mauricio Funes in El Salvador recognized Lobo, and by 2011 the country was readmitted to the OAS with the support of the Venezuelan government (only Ecuador voted against).

Unfortunately, a long-term result was an increase in human rights abuses and drug trafficking, which flourished because of the uncertainty surrounding the very nature of the government. That prompted emigration. Both during and after the crisis, opposition groups (especially the National Front of Popular Resistance, which was founded soon after the coup) received brutal treatment from the government. There has been virtually no coordinated regional response.

Paraguay also experienced an unexpected change of government in 2012. President Fernando Lugo, a former Catholic priest, took power in 2008 on a leftist platform after a bitterly fought campaign. Among other things, his land

reform policy threatened the conservative political elites and he faced coup rumors as soon as he assumed office. After a violent confrontation between a group of landless peasant and police, conservatives made their political move.

The two houses of Congress went very quickly to impeachment, with wide-ranging accusations about Lugo's lack of fitness for office and his grand plans to foment violence to achieve radical ends. They provided him with only a few hours to formulate his defense and so the outcome—his removal—was largely preordained. He was forced out and Federico Franco became president. As with Honduras, international institutions were ineffective.

UNASUR denounced Lugo's ouster and a number of individual governments—Argentina, Ecuador, and Venezuela—announced they would not recognize the Franco government. Other countries simply expressed concern, but even Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff admitted that the easiest option—as in Honduras—was to get to the next election (for 2013) and essentially start from scratch. If there was going to be a presidential election anyway, then the blow to democracy was not necessarily so devastating. Even Venezuela, which was the most vocal with regard to both Honduras and Paraguay, eventually decided to quietly recognize the new presidents after they were elected. In the Paraguayan case, the election yielded the return to power of the traditional conservative Colorado Party. Politics as usual was thus only briefly interrupted.

The theoretical lesson here is that national self-interest is a powerful force. For both Honduras and Paraguay, most Latin American countries (and certainly the United States) were mostly unwilling to take major steps in order to reverse unscheduled (and even illegal) changes of government. Such action, such as economic sanctions, entails costs that they were clearly unwilling to bear. This is the type of response that realist theory would expect. It does not mean that liberal institutionalism is irrelevant, however. A major shift in the region is that there is a chorus of criticism based on international norms of democracy. That chorus was much more muted (or even absent) during the Cold War. Even if international institutions do not currently serve as vehicles for reversing undemocratic (or only partially democratic) government changes, they are using different language than in the past, which at least suggests the possibility of more gradual strengthening of the norms undergirding that language.

Venezuela Crisis

The shifting nature of U.S.–Latin American relations was also evident after protests erupted in Venezuela in February 2014. They started as university students protested the rise of criminal violence in the country, then became connected to the broader (and largely still disorganized) opposition movement.

The administration of Nicolás Maduro immediately and consistently framed the protests as an effort by the United States to overthrow the government, making comparison to the brief April 2002 coup (and at one point even accusing the U.S. Ambassador to Colombia of being part of an assassination plot). This followed basic security logic, namely that Venezuela posed a threat to U.S. hegemony and control over oil, and that therefore even the Obama administration could not resist the pressure to intervene. Over and over, President Maduro indicated that he had defeated an imperialist plot to overthrow or even assassinate him. His government repeated the basic argument that the Venezuelan right was fascist and was funded by the U.S. government, which wanted regime change.

Many in the U.S. Congress gave him further ammunition. The Senate and House both passed separate resolutions condemning the violence used by the Venezuelan government against protesters, and proposed financial sanctions targeted at key decision makers in that government. Some members of Congress (especially those already vocally anti-Castro) hurled their own insults, using words like “thug.” Focusing narrowly on this particular crisis, one might reasonably believe that U.S.–Latin American relations were reaching some sort of new low, perhaps even reminiscent of the Cold War.

Yet the response in the hemisphere was much more muted. In March 2014 the Organization of American States did pass a resolution giving its “appreciation, full support, and encouragement for the initiatives and the efforts of the democratically-elected Government of Venezuela and all political, economic, and social sectors to continue to move forward with the process of national dialogue towards political and social reconciliation.”¹³ Both Panama and the United States opposed the resolution, arguing that it leaned too heavily in support of one side in the dispute. But despite the efforts of the Maduro administration to bring the region in line with its assertion about U.S. interference, leaders of most Latin American countries seemed not to agree. Indeed, even as the protests raged, Brazil’s foreign minister indicated President Dilma Rousseff’s interest in scheduling a state visit to the United States.

Rousseff’s interest in such a visit is also an excellent example of the complicated relationship. In 2013, a now famous former employee of the National Security Agency (NSA), Edward Snowden, leaked a document showing that the United States was spying on several Latin American presidents, including Dilma Rousseff. She was incensed and cancelled not only a previously planned visit, but also a lucrative defense contract with Boeing. Along the lines of liberal institutionalism, she took yet another step by introducing a resolution to the United Nations entitled “The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age,” which was adopted in December 2013.

Introduction of the resolution was accompanied by a blistering speech. The rebuke to the United States was obvious and the Obama administration

immediately worked behind the scenes to smooth relations. From the constructivist perspective, the United Nations as an international institution can have a measure of independent authority. Public evidence that the United States was violating norms of international conduct that it claimed to support provided Rouseff with some leverage.

Concrete Impact

It is not easy to measure the specific impact of these various initiatives to push back against the hegemony of the United States. Interestingly, they have caused considerable consternation in the United States itself. Countless legislators, academics, and pundits have lamented that it is “losing” Latin America and that it is “ignoring” the region, thus providing space for what they see as “anti-American” voices to gain too much credence.

From Latin America and from supporters in the United States there are countless rhetorical claims of success. From that standpoint, the growth of new institutions represents a bulwark against imperialism and intervention, ushering in a new era of unity. After Hugo Chávez’s death, they took on an almost mythical quality. In 2013, President Nicolás Maduro tweeted (Twitter became a major source of communication for him) that the “best way to be loyal to Chávez’s love is to follow his road of truth, to construct socialism daily and to consolidate our American ALBA.”¹⁴ That sentiment is extreme, but captures the core notion that Chávez spearheaded a truly historic shift in hemispheric relations. Latin America was now more united, more independent, and more free.

Measuring that is complicated. Without doubt, there are now more independent regional organizations than ever before. All countries—even allies of the United States—believe that they are both legitimate and valuable. Engaging with the United States on some fronts and excluding it from others is now commonplace. At the same time, that is not the same as reaching economic independence, establishment of an effective political counterbalance, or achievement of unity.

From a purely economic standpoint, the results have been mixed. As will be discussed more in Chapter 9, Latin America has certainly expanded its trading partners, especially with new interest from China. Yet it still trades heavily with the United States, and largely in primary goods. Take the case of Argentina. A serious economic crash in 2001 and 2002 led to skepticism of the market model pushed by the United States and to governments that were highly critical of U.S. policy. When he stepped down as president, Néstor Kirchner became the first secretary-general of UNASUR, which obviously emphasizes the country’s commitment. Yet trade with the United States boomed. From 2003–2013, U.S. exports grew from \$2.4 billion to \$10.2 billion.¹⁵ In the same time period, Argentine’s exports to the United States

went from \$3.2 billion to \$4.3 billion. In a time of supposedly cooling relations, Argentina traded more with the United States than before, and with the trade imbalance also became more dependent. Ideology and its rhetoric routinely get trumped by economic realities.

Countries that a decade ago were dependent on commodities remain in that position. Venezuela's own funding of these new organizations, especially Petrocaribe, is contingent on the global price of oil. Given chronic instability and U.S. intervention in the Middle East, that price has remained high for many years, but fell in late 2014. Shortly before September 11, 2001 the price of oil was just under \$30 a barrel. At one point in 2014 it was over \$100, but by early 2015 it had dropped to \$50. Although Venezuela's trading partners have evolved (for instance, it sends more oil to China and less to the United States than in the past), Venezuela still relies on oil for 95 percent of its export revenue. It produces almost nothing else, which is not a sign of enhanced economic independence.

Meanwhile, despite Chávez's dream of reducing the power of the dollar, the SUCRE has never taken off as a regional alternative. Ironically, economic instability in Venezuela fostered an ongoing currency crisis that increased the demand for dollars in the country. El Salvador, Ecuador, and Panama are all dollarized economies and that has not been seriously challenged, even as governments of different ideological views come and go.

From an economic perspective, there is also the question of sustainability. Venezuela has been the core—though not the only—source of funding for many of these new organizations. The challenge is not simply the price of oil but political will. If the Venezuelan opposition takes power, it almost certainly will cut or even eliminate its commitment to the more ideologically oriented organizations. Whether or not they can survive without Venezuela's political leadership and financial support is an open question.

What about the political side? At no other time in history have so many exclusively Latin American institutions existed that pointedly excluded the United States. There had been aborted efforts at federation, but Simón Bolívar's vision of an independent region really had never taken off. UNASUR in particular has been a major player, working actively to resolve sometimes serious domestic crises in a way that previously was exclusive to the Organization of American States. As yet, its scope remains limited to South America (so, for example, it did not play a role in the Honduras coup crisis beyond condemning it).

What is interesting is that despite the concerted effort to develop Latin American independence from hegemony, the United States is viewed quite favorably in the region.¹⁶ This is true even in Venezuela. The high-level heated rhetoric does not necessarily filter down to the general population. There are countervailing factors to ideology, such as whether your family receives remittances and the degree to which you feel insecurity.¹⁷ There does not seem to be a widespread sense in Latin America that the United States is engaged in a

concerted effort at subjugating the region. This poses a potential challenge to governments seeking to fund anti-hegemonic projects.

More common is a middle ground that values solidarity but embraces much of what the United States has to offer, especially economically but also politically, culturally, and in some cases even militarily. The group of countries that embraces only one or the other is small. The weight of history, with intervention, support for coups, and courting of the military as a political actor, varies greatly from government to government. It is never irrelevant, but neither is it necessarily an obstacle to a smooth working relationship.

Summary and Conclusion

Hugo Chávez's dream of an independent Latin America lives on even after his death. In the first decade of his government, he conceived of all sorts of organizations that addressed almost any aspect of politics and economics one can imagine. At an almost dizzying pace, he and other presidents in the region successfully weaved Latin America-only organizations into the existing diplomatic fabric. Similar efforts had been made before, but not with the same scope.

International relations theory has much to say about the movement in Latin America toward establishing new institutions that do not include the United States. Realism considers them in the context of power balancing, since their explicit intent is to counter the hegemonic position of the United States by finding strength in numbers. All such efforts in the past had failed, but there is some staying power to the current organizations that emerged in the past decade or so.

Within the creation of new institutions we can also see the analytic usefulness of liberal institutional theory. Constructivists hold that embedding ideas within institutions can gradually serve to foster new norms that even hegemonic powers must take into account, even if they do not match their national interests. There can be no doubt that this is taking place in Latin America, which is more supportive of democracy than at any other time in its history. When organizations like UNASUR take a stand, the U.S. government pays attention even when it disagrees.

Finally, part of the prescription for many dependency theorists involves breaking away from the United States as much as possible to ensure truly sovereign and independent development. ALBA, CELAC, UNASUR, and others are examples of that impulse. This is still a work in progress and some of these acronyms may well fade into the historical record without achieving their potential. Nonetheless, they do represent a renewed regional commitment to finding a collective voice, however difficult and sporadic.

Research Questions

1. What would be an effective way to measure the effectiveness of Latin American movements toward economic or political independence?
2. Does it seem that political (such as UNASUR) or economic (such as ALBA) institutions have a better chance of long-term success? Why?
3. How well does liberal institutional theory versus realism explain the development of these new organizations?
4. To what degree are the various anti-hegemony initiatives dependent on funding from the Venezuelan government? Do they seem sustainable?
5. Does the current era of Latin American integration seem more successful than those that have occurred in the past?

Notes

- 1 Quoted in Jones 2007, 223.
- 2 Corrales 2009.
- 3 Levitsky and Roberts 2011, 5.
- 4 Organization of American States website 1962.
- 5 ALBA-TCP website 2014.
- 6 White House website 2009.
- 7 Quintana 2014.
- 8 See CELAC Summit website 2014.
- 9 Wikileaks website 2004.
- 10 Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere 2005.
- 11 Pacific Alliance website.
- 12 Weeks 2009.
- 13 Organization of American States website 2014.
- 14 Maduro tweet 2013. Translated by the author.
- 15 United States Census Bureau website.
- 16 Pew Research Global Attitudes Project 2013.
- 17 Azpuru and Boniface Forthcoming.

Further Sources

Books

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- Hellinger, Daniel Charles. *Global Security Watch: Venezuela* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2012). A balanced analysis of the relationship between the United States and Venezuela, centering on the differing worldviews of the two countries. The perception of what constitutes “security” therefore is very different for the governments of each country.
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- Webber, Jeffery R. and Barry Carr. *The New Latin American Left: Cracks in the Empire* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012). This multidisciplinary book shows how leftist movements have emerged, with a theoretical section but also individual country case studies. It includes discussion of how they perceive relations with the United States.

Websites

- ALBA.** The official website of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America has an English version. It offers not only the specific goals and governing documents of the organization but also statistics (albeit somewhat rudimentary). <http://alba-tcp.org/en/contenido/alba-tcp-eng>
- CELAC.** The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States has an official website that includes access to documents and other information in English. The individual summits also have websites with English-language materials. <http://www.celac.gob.ve/>
- Pacific Alliance.** The official website of the Pacific Alliance includes documents, news, and other information in English. It is updated frequently and even includes a link to its Twitter feed. <http://alianzapacifico.net/en/>
- Telesur.** This is the English-language version of the website of the media company launched by Venezuela in 2005. It is an excellent avenue for understanding how current political events are interpreted within Latin America through a lens that is skeptical of U.S. influence and power. <http://multimedia.telesurtv.net/media/telesur.video.web/telesur-web/#!en>
- Venezuelan News Agency.** The official state news website for Venezuela has an English-language version. It is an excellent avenue for seeing how Venezuelan, Latin American, and even global news is interpreted by governments that disagree with U.S. policy. <http://www.avn.info.ve/english>

Latin American Immigration and U.S. Policy

Timeline

- 1875** U.S. Congress passes first restrictive immigration laws
- 1891** Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) created
- 1942** 1964 Bracero program in place for Mexican farm workers
- 1986** IRCA passed
- 1994** California's Proposition 187 passed
- 1994** Operation Gatekeeper launched in California
- 1994** U.S. invaded Haiti and repatriated refugees
- 1996** Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act passed
- 2004** U.S. sent troops to Haiti to restore order and prevent refugee flow
- 2006** President Bush unsuccessfully attempted new immigration reform
- 2012** President Obama announced Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

Of all the issues surrounding U.S.–Latin American relations in the twenty-first century, perhaps none is as complex as immigration. Myriad laws, both state and federal, have been written since the 1980s as the influx of immigrants has literally changed the face of U.S. society. By 2012 there were 53 million Latinos in the United States.¹ This represented a 50 percent increase since 2000, while the overall population grew only 12 percent.

From a theoretical standpoint, immigration is also complex. Although the United States has used power to advance its interests, the ways in which

that power is wielded have varied. Control over the border—and illegal immigration—is now commonly portrayed in security terms. A large number of enforcement-oriented laws reflect that position. If we cannot establish dominion over the border, the argument goes, then all means of illegal activity—perhaps even terrorism—will ensue. Such a rationale is not limited to the United States, as illegal immigration is a high-profile topic in a number of Latin American countries, most notably Mexico. States therefore act according to their own interests as a way to block unwanted movement and activity at their borders. For the United States, that includes drones, fences, invisible sensors, and any number of other high-tech gadgets.

At the same time, however, realism leaves a considerable theoretical gap with regard to immigration. In particular, we have to crack open the “black box” of the state to understand why certain decisions are made. It is an intermestic issue, as both Latin American and U.S. policy makers navigate the thicket of public opinion, nationalism, ethnocentrism, and even racism to determine the course of action. Dependency theory offers some guidance, because economic dependence plays a part. Weaker economies in Latin America cannot absorb their labor forces, and the dominant country selectively exploits a ready pool of low-paid workers. In a certain sense, low-wage workers can also be seen as a human export, leaving a developing country to help a bigger economy produce goods. Yet dependency theory does not take the security component into account.

In the first half of the twentieth century, Latin America was a region of immigration, where people moved from one country to another and/or people came from other continents, mostly from Europe. For example, many Italians came to Argentina and Uruguay, Germans came to Argentina and Chile, and British came to Central America and parts of northern South America. Palestinians went to several different South American countries, and Japanese went to Argentina, Brazil, and Peru. There are numerous similar examples of Latin America being viewed as a place of potential opportunity. However, by the 1960s, when many Latin American countries were suffering economic downturns, immigration turned to emigration, and many of those migrants began making their way to the United States.

Immigration’s Supply and Demand

To understand the dynamics of immigration, we must view it from several different angles. First, what is the demand side? For example, for a number of different reasons many U.S. businesses—not to mention individuals—are eager to employ Latin American immigrants, sometimes to the point of actively recruiting them or arranging for their travel. Immigration is often framed in terms of “push” and “pull” factors. Demand represents the pull, as it involves a concerted effort to bring migrants to the United States.

Second, what is the supply side? This is the push, representing the reasons why individuals make the difficult decision to leave. Facing various pressures, usually economic in nature, many Latin Americans have run great risks to reach the United States. Underlying both supply and demand is demography. Through the 1990s and 2000s, for example, Latin America had more young people than it could employ, while the United States had an older population and needed young workers. This sort of “demographic fit” further tied the two countries together.² The demographic structures of the two areas have gradually reached more of an equilibrium, which in part accounts for why migration has slowed.

Finally, what have been the legal reactions, political ramifications, and policy prescriptions? The United States has passed numerous laws on the topic, and increasingly even Latin American governments are openly discussing it. Migrants make decisions based on these laws, which in some cases lead to more dangerous routes and a larger amount of money paid to human smugglers.

In addition, we need to distinguish between immigrants, refugees, and asylees. The term “immigrant” refers to people who make their way to the United States to seek employment, find a better life, or reunite with family members who made the trek in the past. A “legal” immigrant has obtained the necessary legal permits (called “visas”) from the U.S. government to work, study, or join family. An “undocumented” immigrant has either come across the border without any such permit, or received a visa but subsequently stayed longer than it stipulated.

Refugees are fleeing political persecution, so their goal is more protection of their own lives rather than a job. If a person is outside the United States and seeking entrance to the country on the basis of persecution, he or she is a refugee, whereas a person already in the United States and seeking to stay by claiming persecution in the country of origin is called an asylee—a term used by the U.S. government to denote someone seeking asylum. In popular parlance, both are called refugees, but asylum seekers have recently become a very important part of the immigration picture in the United States. One serious policy challenge for the U.S. government has been defining “persecution” and establishing means to determine whether an individual faces sufficient threat in their home country to warrant allowing them to remain (or sending them back, in the case of asylees). That has proved to be a constant and sometimes acrimonious debate, based largely on politics.

The dynamics of supply versus demand (or push versus pull) can become a deeply emotional issue. For Latin Americans, the United States can look like a beacon of opportunity, and jobs are plentiful, as U.S. companies even advertise their need for labor. Very often, men are the first to arrive, then they send their earned money back home (called a remittance) and, in some cases, eventually try to bring their families to join them. For those unable to obtain visas, illegal immigration requires confronting the possibility of extreme danger and even death in the deserts and mountains of the southwestern

United States to reach the “promised land.” That struggle can mean months away from their spouses and children, along with constant fear of being discovered. If they are in the country illegally, they can also easily be exploited by U.S. firms, who can avoid labor laws by telling workers they will be deported if they complain. Even if they have legal status, workers do not necessarily know English well enough to understand contracts or know what their rights are under U.S. law. Furthermore, many immigrants are not well educated even in their own language, which increases the chances that they will be exploited.

The demand side is also a result of a confluence of demographic factors. Immigrants to the United States are more likely to be young adults than any other age and therefore represent an enticing pool of labor for U.S. companies. Further, given how strenuous migration is, these young people are more likely to be healthy and ready to work. Because the population of the United States (and other more developed countries) is increasingly older, there is a match between the demand for immigrant labor and its supply.

But for many U.S. citizens, the issue revolves around jobs. For them, Latin American (but especially Mexican) immigration means cheap labor—people who are willing to accept lower wages and fewer benefits. A willing U.S. worker may no longer have a chance in certain sectors—such as construction or agriculture—if companies choose to hire a foreign workforce that will accept longer hours, lower pay, and fewer benefits. These fears are greatly enhanced when U.S. unemployment rises, whether nationally or in specific U.S. states.

Unfortunately, in the United States the concerns over immigration also often take on a racist tinge. Terms such as “wetback” (referring to people who swam across the Rio Grande) came into popular usage by the post–World War II era. Although originally aimed primarily at Mexican immigrants, they became common terms for anyone of darker skin. The same is true of using “illegal” as a pronoun to mean “a person who is in the country illegally,” mostly employed pejoratively. Such terms do not differentiate between mestizos (those of mixed Spanish and indigenous lineage, whose skin may in fact be quite light) and those of pure indigenous blood. To nervous U.S. citizens, immigrants are often darker skinned and speak a different language, which makes them unknown and therefore potentially dangerous.

By the end of the twentieth century, the overtly racist and anti-Catholic rationale for restricting immigration was no longer considered acceptable, though it did not disappear. It is difficult to know how many people still hold such ideas without admitting it, but members of political groups like the Tea Party have made proposals such as allowing ranchers to shoot anyone seen crossing the border illegally. There exists what sociologist Leo Chávez has termed the “Latino threat narrative,” where myths about the danger of Latino immigrants foster fear that is hard to overcome.³

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, by 2012 a total of 53 million (or 17 percent) of the U.S. population are Hispanic, a term that the census uses interchangeably with “Latino.” The former refers to someone either born in

a Spanish-speaking country or with that heritage, including even U.S. citizens with origins in Spanish-speaking countries, thus leaving Brazilians, with their Portuguese heritage, in limbo. The latter tends to include Brazilians, though the label is not universally accepted. The Hispanic population has grown considerably, up from 6.4 percent in 1980.

People born in Mexico now constitute 28.2 percent (which represents a total of 11.5 million) of all foreign-born individuals in the United States. For Latin American countries, Mexico is followed by El Salvador (3.1 percent), Cuba (2.7 percent), the Dominican Republic (2.4 percent), and Guatemala (2.2 percent). Overall, the Caribbean (which includes English-speaking countries) accounts for 9.5 percent, Central America for 7.8 percent, and South America for 6.7 percent. Even the relatively lower percentage for South America means 2.7 million people.

Historical Background

Given the stronger economic growth and political stability in the United States than in most Latin American countries, the United States has always been a destination for Latin Americans who hope to provide better living and working conditions for themselves and their families. Until the period of the U.S. Civil War, immigration was unrestricted. Of course, until 1848 much of “the West” was still Mexican territory, but even for several decades afterward there was enough space and opportunity to allow Latin American immigrants relative freedom of movement. In fact, the U.S. government actively sought immigration to fill the needs of industry, which faced worker shortages.

Beginning in 1875, a series of measures in the U.S. Congress began a long process of immigrant restriction. That year, prostitutes and convicts were not allowed; then in 1882 the ban spread to anyone with mental illness, “retardation,” or “likely to become a public charge,” plus any Chinese labor and, in 1885, those who would become contract laborers. In 1903 and 1907, the laws further encompassed epileptics, vagrants, polygamists, anyone with “radical” political beliefs or certain physical handicaps, and unaccompanied children. All of those conditions or categories were ill defined, which left much open to interpretation and meant they were applied unevenly. Yet through the 1920s, when quotas were being placed on European immigrants, no such rules applied to Latin Americans.

The reason for this policy divergence centered on the question of whether an immigrant would seek to become a citizen. Europeans were likely to do so, but Mexicans were not, and Mexicans were much easier to deport. As a 1911 Senate report noted, “Because of their strong attachment to their native land æ and the possibility of their residence here being discontinued, few become citizens of the United States. ... In the case of a Mexican, he is less desirable as a citizen than as a laborer.”⁴

As immigration laws became more restrictive, the power of the U.S. government's immigration service increased to ensure that "less desirable" immigrants could not slip in undetected. First created in 1891, the new Immigration Service (soon to become the Immigration and Naturalization Service, or INS) took on the task of processing newly arriving immigrants.

During the Depression era of the 1930s, when unemployment in the United States hit 25 percent in 1933 and did not fall below 10 percent until 1941 (when the World War II-related industries sparked a revival), public reaction against immigrants was potent. Between 1931 and 1939, more than 400,000 Mexicans were "repatriated" to Mexico, sent home because they were deemed to be taking jobs from native-born citizens. The U.S. Border Patrol, created in 1924, became more active.

Immigration policy closely mirrored economic prospects in the United States, because in 1942, only three years after the last repatriation, Mexican immigration was once again opened through the Bracero (from the Spanish "brazo" or arm) program, which lasted until 1964. Because many U.S. workers had left to fight World War II, the government opened the borders to Mexicans seeking temporary work in agriculture.

More than 4.5 million Mexican workers utilized the program, which continued after World War II because farmers claimed they could not find sufficient numbers of U.S. citizens to work in the fields. Demography also played a role, in that the Baby Boom generation had not yet reached working age, and the rapidly growing economy required labor. Even though U.S. laws were supposed to protect the braceros from discrimination, in practice abuses were not uncommon. The program eventually came to an end because of persistent complaints that braceros were displacing U.S. citizens. That too was related to demography, since the Baby Boom generation was entering the workforce.

There has always been a high correlation between U.S. public attitudes toward immigration and unemployment rates, though they can change quickly and are not always held strongly. For example, shifts in the U.S. economy and unemployment rate may change public perceptions relatively quickly. Not surprisingly, if people feel economically vulnerable, they are much less willing to support the entrance of new workers into the country.

For twenty years after the bracero program ended, the relationship between the U.S. government and illegal immigrants from Mexico was ambivalent. The INS was in charge of patrolling the border and enforcing immigration laws, but it was common knowledge that even deported undocumented immigrants were likely to succeed eventually if they kept trying. This *modus vivendi* was accepted by the workers themselves, businesses that wished to employ them, and the U.S. public in general, which did not immediately clamor for crackdowns. Immigration reform in 1965 abolished the national quota system and replaced it with the same ceiling (20,000) for every country. Importantly, it also included provisions for family reunification, which meant that family members could come even if the ceiling had been reached.

The overall effect was to increase the number of people coming from Latin America.

Eventually, however, public opinion played a role in important legislation passed in 1986, after President Reagan had been vocal about illegal immigration for several years. In press conferences in late 1983 he made known his views, putting them in stark terms of “losing control.” In October he said:

I am going to try and get, and have been supportive of, some immigration legislation for a long time. This country has lost control of its own borders, and no country can sustain that kind of position. ... I want to sign, as quickly as possible, immigration legislation...⁵

Two months later, he made the point even more forcefully, as he faced opposition from the Democratic Party in Congress:

We have legislation ... in the Congress right now, that we've been trying to get passed—and we've had trouble getting it passed—having to do with this entire problem and with immigrants and trying to close our borders, or control our borders. I should say, against those who are neither immigrants or refugees and who just come into the country and suddenly disappear into the whole population. But we have to a certain extent lost control of our borders. There are a great many illegal immigrants coming into our country, and we're trying with this legislation to restore it to legal immigration and at the same time keep the door open for those refugees.⁶

“This legislation” referred to Republican congressional efforts to pass a new immigration bill. Only in 1986 did it finally come to fruition. The purpose of the Immigrant Reform and Control Act (IRCA) was to limit undocumented immigration by penalizing employers who hired such labor, increasing funding to the border patrol, and also granting amnesty to many undocumented workers already in the United States. An amnesty is a pardon, a freedom from prosecution, which in this case meant that anyone who had been in the United States illegally since January 1, 1982 could apply for legalization. Approximately 2.7 million immigrants were granted amnesty; three-fourths of them were Mexican.

The amnesty portion of IRCA came as a result not of public pressure, but rather from U.S. industries that did not want to lose what had become a major part of their workforce, especially in agriculture. Indeed, there was even a provision for “special agricultural workers” who had arrived since May 1985 but worked steadily for at least three months. This labor was an integral part of the economy.

The Reagan administration's intent was to curb undocumented immigration, but statistics demonstrate that IRCA did not succeed in that regard. Not only did IRCA not deter illegal crossings, but migrants who wish to reach the United States often do so. The border is too long (2,000 miles from San Ysidro,

Box 10.1 Immigration Reform and Control Act (1986)

Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 – Title I: Control of Illegal Immigration – Part A: Employment – Amends the Immigration and Nationality Act to make it unlawful for a person or other entity to: (1) hire (including through subcontractors), recruit, or refer for a fee for U.S. employment any alien knowing that such person is unauthorized to work, or any person without verifying his or her work status; or (2) continue to employ an alien knowing of such person’s unauthorized work status.

Makes verification compliance (including the use of State employment agency documentation) an affirmative defense to any hiring or referral violation.

Establishes an employment verification system. Requires: (1) the employer to attest, on a form developed by the Attorney General, that the employee’s work status has been verified by examination of a passport, birth certificate, social security card, alien documentation papers, or other proof; (2) the worker to similarly attest that he or she is a U.S. citizen or national, or authorized alien; and (3) the employer to keep such records for three years in the case of referral or recruitment, or the later of three years or one year after employment termination in the case of hiring.

States that nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize a national identity card or system. ...

Directs the Attorney General to adjust to temporary resident status those aliens who: (1) apply within 18 months; (2) establish that they entered the United States before January 1, 1982, and have resided here continuously in an unlawful status (including Cuban/Haitian entrants) since such date; and (3) are otherwise admissible.

Authorizes similar status adjustment for specified aliens who entered legally as nonimmigrants but whose period of authorized stay ended before January 1, 1982. (States that in the case of exchange visitors the two-year foreign residence requirement must have been met or waived.)

Prohibits the legalization of persons: (1) convicted of a felony or three or more misdemeanors in the United States; or (2) who have taken part in political, religious, or racial persecution. Requires an alien applying for temporary resident status to register under the Military Selective Service Act, if such Act so requires. ...

Separates temporary agricultural labor from other temporary labor for purposes of nonimmigrant (H-2A visa) worker provisions.

Requires an employer H-2A visa petition to certify that: (1) there are not enough local U.S. workers for the job; and (2) similarly employed

U.S. workers' wages and working conditions will not be adversely affected. Authorizes the Secretary of Labor to charge application fees.

Prohibits the Secretary from approving such petition if: (1) the job is open because of a strike or lock-out; (2) the employer violated temporary worker admissions terms; (3) in a case where such workers are not covered by State workers' compensation laws, the employer has not provided equivalent protection at no cost to such workers; or (4) the employer has not made regional recruitment efforts in the traditional or expected labor supply.

Source: Library of Congress, Bill Summary & Status 99th Congress (1985–1986) S.1200 CRS Summary. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/99th-congress/senate-bill/1200>

California, to Brownsville, Texas) and easy to cross, and the allure of jobs remains as strong as ever. Importantly, whether in the lettuce fields of California or the poultry-processing plants of North Carolina, countless U.S. employers are perfectly willing to hire illegal migrants. No U.S. law has yet been able to stem the tide, and even periodic Border Patrol measures have been only sporadically successful. Furthermore, IRCA, by creating fairly lax enforcement rules, may have simply spawned a flourishing market in forged documents.

One prominent example of the new emphasis on enforcement was Operation Gatekeeper, begun in 1994 in the San Diego region. It involved not only more Border Patrol agents, but also investment in fences, lighting (thus making night crossings more difficult), infrared technology for agents, ground sensors, helicopters, and computers. Similar efforts were launched in other western border states, with similarly dramatic names (such as Operation Safeguard in Arizona and Texas's Operation Hold the Line). Although the INS (later called Immigration and Customs Enforcement) insisted that the operation was successful, many doubt that claim. Given the consistently high levels of both supply and demand, immigrants continue to risk border crossings, sometimes further east where deterrence efforts are less evident and thus easier to avoid, but also more dangerous. In addition, once in the United States they are more likely to stay than to risk a second crossing.⁷ The cost in both monetary and risk terms creates an incentive not to return.

In 1990, Congress created the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform, which released a study in 1994, the title of which ("Restoring Credibility") demonstrated the lack of consensus on immigration policy. The report noted that "reducing the employment magnet is the linchpin of a comprehensive strategy to reduce illegal immigration," but only rather helplessly remarked that current efforts were ineffective.

The next major legal attempt in the United States to address the issue of illegal immigration came in 1996 with the passage of the Illegal Immigration

Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act (IIRIR), which represented President Clinton's response to public criticism of his immigration policies. It entailed doubling the number of Border Patrol agents to 10,000 over a five-year span, building a fourteen-mile-long fence along the border, punishing immigrants who overstay their visas by not allowing them to reapply for three years, imposing harsher penalties for anyone who knowingly assists an illegal alien to falsify documents, and allowing the use of wiretaps to investigate abuses. The act also granted immigration officers greater latitude in expelling immigrants who arrive with falsified documents or no documents.

The act certainly tightened border security, but migrants continued to make illegal crossings. Critics of the policy argue that immigrants' desire to cross has not waned and they have been compelled to find more remote and dangerous areas of the border, which has led to more deaths by dehydration, exposure, and hypothermia. Would-be immigrants are also paying coyotes, professional smugglers who employ dangerous strategies to get people across for a hefty fee. Plus, in recent years the number of unaccompanied children has also increased, which only magnifies the danger. The irony is that the U.S. effort to slow down illegal immigration has led to more illegal activities in smuggling and documentation.

The legislation angered a number of Latin American governments, especially in Central America, who were concerned that the bill would lead to the massive deportation of their citizens. Presidents as well as their foreign ministers repeatedly raised the issue with the Clinton administration because they were concerned about the political, economic, and social costs of an exodus back to their home countries. These entreaties were at least partially successful, and Congress provided certain exemptions for Guatemalan, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, and Haitian immigrants already in the United States. "Temporary Protected Status" (TPS) provides short-term relief for people who came illegally to the United States as a result of serious problems like natural disasters. Since the mid-1990s, Latin American embassies and consulates in the United States have been more assertively making their concerns about immigration policies known.

In his memoirs, President Clinton notes the essential problems that would only worsen, as he spoke to Central American presidents:

The leaders were worried about the anti-immigration stance Republicans had taken and wanted my assurances that there would be no mass deportations. I gave it [sic] to them, but also said we had to enforce our immigration laws.⁸

The tension between enforcing the law and overwhelming the sending countries in Latin America intensified over time.

After September 11, 2001, the Bush administration reorganized immigration agencies by putting them under the auspices of the new Department of Homeland Security. The INS was folded into a new organization, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Although the functions

remained the same (for example, the USCIS took over the duties of granting visas and permits), the changes reflected the new emphasis on immigration as a central element in national security. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) took on the operational duties that used to be associated with the INS.

The “Demand” Side of Immigration

Latin American immigrants come to the United States because of the demand for their labor. Businesses in the United States have an insatiable thirst for a large pool of cheap, hardworking labor. This demand has even been labeled an addiction.⁹ Though these immigrants have a profound impact on U.S. society, it is only an unintended consequence. Their main interest is economic and personal, either finding a job or joining a family member.

The U.S. government has a political incentive to assist U.S. businesses seeking better profits, but also an incentive to keep that support as far away from the public eye as possible, given potential nationalist responses. Thus, “[t]hroughout the twentieth century the United States regularly encouraged or welcomed the entry of Mexican workers while publicly pretending not to do so.”¹⁰

The demand side has made for odd bedfellows in U.S. politics. Supporters from both parties point to U.S. businesses that benefit from a constant flow of legal immigrants. Riding a wave of Republican victories in 1994, Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich argued, “I am very pro legal immigration. I think legal immigration has given America many of its most dynamic and creative citizens, and I think we would be a very, very self-destructive country if we sent negative signals on legal immigration.”¹¹ This type of statement from a powerful Republican helped to scuttle bipartisan legislation introduced in 1993 to set an overall ceiling on the number of immigrants allowed to enter each year. One of its cosponsors, Senator Harry Reid, said that he only desired “realistic recognition that something must be done to reduce these escalating costs to ensure that our children and grandchildren do not inherit a country in which no one would want to live.”¹² But Democratic President Bill Clinton agreed more with Republican Speaker Gingrich.

Meanwhile, conservative think tanks such as the Cato Institute joined forces with the liberal American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the pro-Hispanic National Council of La Raza to fight congressional efforts to make cuts in legal immigration. These disparate groups came together for different reasons but with the same goal: to allow legal immigrants to continue coming to the United States.

Conservatives became more split over time over the question of passing immigration reform. Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney moved his policy stance around during the 2012 campaign depending on his audience. Even in the Tea Party, a potent force in Republican politics, some members began talking about reform while others remained adamantly opposed. The

former are therefore closer to President Obama's position than to much of the Republican leadership.

With regard to undocumented immigration, strange combinations can also come together. Human rights and pro-immigrant activists address the abuses that undocumented immigrants must suffer when traveling to and working in the United States, and many businesses rely on a flow of immigrants—even illegal—that they do not want to see disrupted. In some cases, businesses argue for amnesties, which can legalize their workers and eliminate the threat of raids. They also lobby against state legislatures passing their own restrictive measures.

Another effect of immigration has been Hispanic political clout. The 2000 presidential election was decided in Florida, where Cuban Americans are a potent political force, and candidates carefully consider Latino views there. In California and Texas, Mexican Americans represent a group that no politician can ignore. As potential voters and also as elected officials, Latinos have been exerting tremendous influence on U.S. politics. As the Latino population grows nationally, parties ignore it at their own risk.

The precise effects of that influence, however, are less clear. Just as "Latin America" encompasses immense complexity, so does "Hispanic" or "Latino," which refer to different countries of origin, different amounts of time spent in the United States, and different generations. As a result, any politician trying to court the Hispanic vote must take into account many different factors, including the fact that different groups may have different views on specific issues.

In 1976, five Hispanic members of Congress created the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC), which by 2014 had 27 members. In 1978 they established a nonprofit organization, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, whose purpose was to create more linkages between the Hispanic population and the U.S. political system, as well as encourage greater educational opportunities for Hispanic youth.¹³ The votes of the CHC demonstrate the breadth of Hispanic diversity. For example, when Congress voted in 2003 on the free trade agreement between Chile and the United States, only six of twenty CHC members were in favor. The year before, fifteen voted against granting trade preferences to the Andean countries of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. Although these legislators are deeply interested in Latin America, their voting preferences often revolve around their home district, party, and reelection; if trade agreements are unpopular with their constituents, they vote against them.

The political impact of Latin American immigrants is also felt in their country of origin. The 1994 presidential election in the Dominican Republic may well have been decided in New York City, where Dominicans represent the largest group of new immigrants. Although they had to return to the Dominican Republic to vote then, the law changed in 2011 so that expatriates could vote absentee. In a similar vein, in 1998 the Mexican government granted voting rights in Mexico to those who had become naturalized citizens of the United States, and in 2005 they were allowed to vote abroad. These laws serve to maintain close ties between Mexican immigrants and

their homeland and give Mexican politicians more incentive to address problems faced by immigrants and their families. This is true in other parts of Latin America as well, including some—such as El Salvador and Honduras—that are important sending countries.

Latino Immigration and U.S. Politics

In the past two decades, the debate in the United States has become more divisive. Sons and daughters of immigrants hold important positions, even as members of Congress, and many advocate groups argue for more humane and less restrictive policies. But particularly in the context of an economic recession and widespread distrust of the federal government, voices are shriller than before. Talk about immigration reform to replace IRCA has not translated into action.

In the U.S. economy, immigrants—both legal and illegal—increasingly represent the backbone of the construction, agriculture, and service industries, which has led U.S. businesses to act as proponents of broader policies. Furthermore, so many immigrants have arrived over the years that they have contributed to cultural shifts. First in the border states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, but in the 1990s also the Midwestern and Southern states, it has become common to hear Spanish being spoken, see Spanish-language advertising, hear new types of music, and taste new foods from restaurants and stores.

The U.S. fast food industry took note early on. In 1962, a man named Glen Bell in southern California opened the first Taco Bell, which paved the way for a billion-dollar market in Mexican-style fast food. Of course, it has to meet local tastes, such that the food is not the same as cuisine in Mexico (where you will not see tacos made of Doritos). In short, Latin American immigration had become part of the mainstream, and in many parts of the United States new hybrid cultures combined Latin American, U.S., and other cultural influences. Despite that, or in part perhaps because of it, strong opposition materialized against allowing more Hispanic immigrants. The cultural influence of Hispanics was widespread and obvious, which at times fostered greater understanding, but could also spark nationalist sentiment intent on rolling it back. Many people are angered at seeing billboards in another language or being required to press a button to continue to hear a phone message in English.

California, with its large neighboring city Tijuana on the other side of the border and its economic success in the latter half of the twentieth century, was the main destination for Mexican immigration, so it is not surprising that it also became a major political battleground for immigration policy. The most prominent example was the passage of Proposition 187 in 1994, a ballot measure approved by 60 percent of the state's population. Stating that the people of California had "suffered and are suffering economic hardship caused by the presence of illegal aliens in this state," as well as "personal injury and damage caused by the criminal conduct of illegal aliens," its purpose was

to deny illegal immigrants access to publicly funded programs.¹⁴ Support for Prop 187 came from Californians who believed their tax dollars were paying for services received by people who did not pay into the system and were therefore “free riding” on health care, welfare, and education without ever contributing. Its supporters wanted to deny illegal immigrants such services, which would perhaps reduce the perception that immigrants could arrive in the United States and immediately become a drain on the state.

Immediately, opponents appealed Prop 187 to a U.S. District Court, which prevented it from being enforced, and in 1998 it was ruled unconstitutional, on the basis that immigration policy was a federal, not a state, prerogative. That ruling took the air out of similar efforts in other states (such as New Jersey). Had Prop 187 been upheld in California, it probably would have been copied elsewhere. However, it had already shown the cleavages that existed not only in California but also across the country. The debate was often conflictive, defensive, and accusatory, with each side viewing the other as having ill intentions.

Those who supported Prop 187 worked on developing new laws that could withstand judicial scrutiny. In the 2000s, the country saw a slew of these laws. Some of the higher-profile cases—such as S.B. 1070 in Arizona, which became law in 2010—had part of their content ruled unconstitutional and others left alone. For example, in 2012 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the state could not require that immigrants keep documents on their person at all times, but that they could be held if they were stopped by police and there was a “reasonable suspicion” that they were in the country illegally. How to define such vague terms remains an open matter. Overall, in 2013 state legislatures enacted 184 laws and adopted 253 resolutions related to immigration, which represented a 67 percent increase from 2012.¹⁵ Not surprisingly, this tended to alienate Mexicans, and so many lawmakers in Arizona scrambled to counter the view that their state was anti-Mexican.

This was a major step backward. Back in 2000, Mexican President Vicente Fox came to office as a reformer, dedicated to working more closely with the United States to protect Mexican immigrants. During his campaign, he had pledged to work not only for Mexicans within his country’s borders but also for Mexican immigrants living elsewhere. After winning the election, he continued to reiterate that commitment, saying that he would not leave Mexican migrants on their own.

On the other side of the border, George W. Bush was sworn in in January 2001. He and Fox made public displays of mutual respect, including a statement in February 2001:

[W]e agree that there should be an orderly framework for migration which ensures humane treatment, legal security, and dignified labor conditions. For this purpose, we are instructing our Governments to engage, at the earliest opportunity, in formal high-level negotiations aimed at achieving short and long-term agreements that will allow us to constructively address migration and labor issues between our two countries.¹⁶

With this exchange of friendly words (and large belt buckles), it appeared likely that immigration would become a high priority, but the events of September 11, 2001 abruptly changed everything. Hoping to head off any terrorist attempts to cross the often-porous border, the Bush administration increased security and checkpoints, ensuring long waits and more difficult passage. For three years, there would be no constructive agreements.

The relationship soured considerably, made worse by Mexico's resistance to the U.S. decision to invade Iraq in 2003. In November 2003, Mexico's ambassador to the United Nations gave a speech in which he blasted the United States for wanting a "relationship of convenience and subordination"; "it sees us as a backyard."¹⁷ Although Vicente Fox repudiated the remarks and fired the ambassador, the words seemed to epitomize the weakened relationship.

The only legislation resulting from all these promises was authorization for 700 miles of fencing, which President Bush signed in 2006. Both President Fox and President-elect Felipe Calderón vigorously denounced building a wall in the absence of more comprehensive immigration reform. Calderón's election marked the first application of the new Mexican law allowing citizens abroad to vote in presidential elections.

Despite President Bush's relatively moderate proposal, the calls against continued immigration continued. For example, prominent political scientist Samuel Huntington argued, "The persistent inflow of Hispanic immigrants threatens to divide the United States into two peoples, two cultures, and two languages," because Hispanics were not assimilating into U.S. culture.¹⁸ Indeed, he argued, if Mexican immigration were to stop, then U.S. wages for low-income workers would rise, debate over the use of Spanish and controversy over bilingual education would end, debate over immigrant use of government resources would conclude, and the average skills and education of the average immigrant would increase. That view remains persistent and widespread.

Stuck in the foreign policy mires of Afghanistan and Iraq, President Bush was never able to muster the necessary votes in Congress to pass immigration reform. Further, the Republican Party split on the issue of immigration. Whereas President Reagan was successful in generating the necessary votes for reform, by the 2000s the rank and file in Congress increasingly won primaries with anti-immigrant sentiment. There was still a significant pro-business streak in the party that viewed immigrants as an essential part of the economy, but these voices were drowned out.

The question of border security emerged as a core issue. Those who oppose immigration reform often argue that nothing can be done until the U.S. government has "operational control" over the border. This is entirely subjective and impossible to quantify, so remains an insurmountable sticking point. Therefore President Obama, who like his predecessor championed immigration reform, was similarly stymied. At the end of his first term, Congress passed (and he signed) the Border Tunnel Prevention Act of 2012, to impose stricter punishments on anyone who dug under from Mexico to the United States. There is no evidence that it deterred anyone from doing so.

Immigration from Mexico is still an important and even emotional public policy issue. For many, the overall effect of that immigration has been pernicious, eroding the economic, social, and cultural foundations of the United States itself. There is no disputing the increases in the U.S. Hispanic population, but whether it can somehow be labeled as “good” or “bad” continues to touch deep nerves.

Immigrant Treatment

Increasingly, policy makers have been compelled to address the problems that immigrant workers face, which at the extreme can lead to death. Immigrants—especially those in the country illegally—often take dangerous jobs that native workers do not want, and their U.S. employers take fewer steps to ensure their safety. Illegal immigrants are highly unlikely to complain about working conditions for fear of being deported, but even legal immigrants avoid complaining because their jobs can pay many times what jobs at home (such as Mexico) pay. Also, immigrants are often not aware of their legal rights.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have emerged to provide assistance to immigrants and a forum to discuss abuses of their civil liberties, as well as promoting policies that would continue the flow of immigrants to the United States. Groups like the National Council for La Raza work to educate immigrants, residents, and naturalized citizens, as well as native-born U.S. citizens, about the state of immigration policies and protection of immigrants making their way into the United States.

At times this has succeeded in creating political pressure. The most successful is the focus on young people brought into the United States illegally when they were minors, meaning they had no choice in their situation. Legislation called the DREAM Act (for “Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors”) to grant them legal status was first introduced in 2001. Although specific details have changed in different proposals, the basic thrust is that it would cover those who were brought to the United States before they were 16 and who currently are not older than 35. They must have a clean record, have graduated from high school (or have a GED), and have lived continuously in the United States for an extended period of time. Congress has yet to pass this legislation, but in 2012 President Obama employed similar criteria to announce that he would use executive authority to provide “deferred action” that would prevent deportation. This was called Deferred Action for Child Arrivals (or DACA) and qualified individuals could apply for it. A number of states also passed their own versions that provided access to higher education.

In a statement announcing the action, President Obama said that the young people eligible for deferred action “are Americans in their heart, in their minds, in every single way but one: on paper.” The issue is politically charged enough that he was interrupted more than once before finishing his words.

Box 10.2 President Obama's Statement on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, June 2012

Good afternoon, everybody. This morning, Secretary Napolitano announced new actions my administration will take to mend our nation's immigration policy, to make it more fair, more efficient, and more just—specifically for certain young people sometimes called “Dreamers.”

These are young people who study in our schools, they play in our neighborhoods, they're friends with our kids, they pledge allegiance to our flag. They are Americans in their heart, in their minds, in every single way but one: on paper. They were brought to this country by their parents—sometimes even as infants—and often have no idea that they're undocumented until they apply for a job or a driver's license, or a college scholarship.

Put yourself in their shoes. Imagine you've done everything right your entire life—studied hard, worked hard, maybe even graduated at the top of your class—only to suddenly face the threat of deportation to a country that you know nothing about, with a language that you may not even speak.

That's what gave rise to the DREAM Act. It says that if your parents brought you here as a child, if you've been here for five years, and you're willing to go to college or serve in our military, you can one day earn your citizenship. And I have said time and time and time again to Congress that, send me the DREAM Act, put it on my desk, and I will sign it right away.

Now, both parties wrote this legislation. And a year and a half ago, Democrats passed the DREAM Act in the House, but Republicans walked away from it. It got 55 votes in the Senate, but Republicans blocked it. The bill hasn't really changed. The need hasn't changed. It's still the right thing to do. The only thing that has changed, apparently, was the politics.

As I said in my speech on the economy yesterday, it makes no sense to expel talented young people, who, for all intents and purposes, are Americans—they've been raised as Americans; understand themselves to be part of this country—to expel these young people who want to staff our labs, or start new businesses, or defend our country simply because of the actions of their parents—or because of the inaction of politicians.

In the absence of any immigration action from Congress to fix our broken immigration system, what we've tried to do is focus our immigration enforcement resources in the right places. So we prioritized border security, putting more boots on the southern border than at any time in our history—today, there are fewer illegal crossings than at any time in the past 40 years. We focused and used discretion about whom to prosecute,

focusing on criminals who endanger our communities rather than students who are earning their education. And today, deportation of criminals is up 80 percent. We've improved on that discretion carefully and thoughtfully. Well, today, we're improving it again.

Effective immediately, the Department of Homeland Security is taking steps to lift the shadow of deportation from these young people. Over the next few months, eligible individuals who do not present a risk to national security or public safety will be able to request temporary relief from deportation proceedings and apply for work authorization.

Source: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/06/15/remarks-president-immigration>

A humanitarian crisis emerged in 2013 and 2014 when over 60,000 (and rising) unaccompanied minors—mostly from Central America—crossed the U.S.–Mexico border illegally. Border states were overwhelmed. The U.S. government immediately established talks with Latin American embassies to determine how the children could be returned to their countries of origin. Vice President Joe Biden took the step of emphasizing to Central American audiences that illegal immigration was dangerous and should not be undertaken. An ongoing challenge is that those audiences are well aware of that fact, but it does not serve as a deterrent.

The Plight of Refugees

Although immigrants, especially Mexican, often dominate the discussion, the dilemma of how to deal with refugees also flares up periodically. By far the largest group consists of Cubans, who are granted the broadest rights of any refugees. According to the State Department, from 1975 to 2012 approximately 215,000 Latin American refugees were resettled in the United States.¹⁹ In 2012 a total of 2,078 refugees did so, and 94 percent of them were Cuban. Colombians represented a very distant second. Any Cuban able to reach land in the United States is allowed to stay, a privilege not granted to citizens of any other Latin American country.

According to the Refugee Act of 1980, a refugee is defined as “a person outside his or her country of nationality who is unable or unwilling to return because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.”²⁰ Because the term “well-founded” is left undefined, the law allows government officials very wide latitude in deciding who will be granted refugee status. Very often, those decisions reflect political concerns: refugees from

“enemy” countries, especially Cuba and Nicaragua, receive open arms, but citizens of “friendly” countries, even harsh dictatorships, do not.

Ever since the revolution pushed many people out of Cuba, the U.S. government has granted Cuban immigrants a different status than anyone else. The Cuban government has always been well aware of U.S. policies and has periodically used them for its own political advantage.

Until the 1980s, Cubans constituted by far the largest group of political refugees from Latin America. More than a million came to the United States between 1959 and the late 1980s; eventually 10 percent of the Cuban population came to reside in the United States. In the 1960s, many of the immigrants were wealthier and often tied to the Batista regime in some manner, and they were welcomed with open arms. Between 1961 and 1971, the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare paid out \$730 million in subsidies to help recent immigrants; from 1960 to 1962, more than 14,000 unaccompanied children were sent to the United States in Operation “Pedro Pan” because their parents were unable to obtain visas for themselves. After negotiations with the United States in 1965, Castro opened the country’s doors to allow people to leave if they wished, and the U.S. government paid for an airlift that lasted from 1965 until 1973.

The key legislation in the United States was the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act, which made it easier for Cubans to declare themselves refugees and become permanent residents. As a consequence, Cubans enjoyed a status not conferred on citizens of any other Latin American country, because the immigrant has essentially no burden of proof to demonstrate that he or she is fleeing persecution. In practice, the mere fact of coming from Cuba constitutes sufficient proof.

However, by the late 1970s, the wealthier Cubans had already emigrated and the less educated (and often darker-skinned) Cubans replaced them. Not coincidentally, over time the attitude of U.S. policy makers also became more ambivalent. In April 1980, thousands of Cubans stormed the Peruvian embassy in Havana in search of asylum. Responding to this pressure, Fidel Castro announced he would open the Port of Mariel to anyone who wanted to pick up Cuban relatives and take them back to the United States. President Jimmy Carter then declared that the United States would “provide an open heart and open arms for the tens of thousands of refugees seeking freedom from Communist domination.”²¹

The response was a massive exodus, with 125,000 Cubans launching anything that would float. Castro let them all leave, saying good riddance to such “counterrevolutionaries,” and for good measure, he also released a number of convicted criminals from jail to join in. The United States was overwhelmed, and Castro had successfully maneuvered to embarrass the United States while also purging his country.

In 1965 and 1980, Castro allowed relatively open emigration to take place, which sent floods of Cubans to the United States. In both cases, the

U.S. government had little choice but to accept them. In 1994, Castro once again opened Cuba's doors, but the U.S. reaction was different, as the Coast Guard picked up anyone found at sea and sent them to the naval base at Guantánamo Bay. The Clinton administration negotiated with Castro and reached an agreement whereby Cuba would deter illegal immigration and the United States would not accept any rafter found at sea, but would accept a minimum of 20,000 immigrants a year, the number that had previously been announced as the maximum. In 1995, the detainees at Guantánamo were allowed to enter the United States, but only after Castro agreed that in the future he would not prosecute anyone returned to Cuba after being picked up by the U.S. Coast Guard. By 2012, Cubans were coming to the United States in record numbers, with 46,000 in that year alone.

The overall result has been dubbed the "wet feet, dry feet" policy, which continues today. Unlike other groups (such as Haitians), Cubans who reach the mainland United States are permitted to remain, and those picked up at sea are not (which some years can reach as high as 8,000 people). One unfortunate result has been an increase in smuggling, and many Cubans die in the attempt. Even some conservative Cuban Americans have started questioning the policy's logic. The rationale for accepting Cubans is that they are fleeing persecution, but it is common for them to travel back and forth to the island once gaining legal status, thus calling into question how persecuted they really are. In 2014 the two countries established high-level immigration talks, but as yet no new policies have been announced.

Especially during the 1980s, questions arose about whether to accept people fleeing Central American instability, whether the government was Marxist (Nicaragua) or anti-Communist military (particularly El Salvador, but also Guatemala and Honduras). Nicaragua and El Salvador were prickly cases because the United States was deeply involved in their civil wars, which were spurring on the refugee movements. But because the Salvadoran government was anti-Communist and therefore an ally, the U.S. government accepted almost no Salvadoran claims of refugee status. In Nicaragua, refugees were accepted until the end of the Sandinista regime in 1990.

Another country that deserves mention is Haiti, which had been rocked by crisis since the fall of the Jean-Claude Duvalier dictatorship in 1986. Relatively free and fair elections held in 1990 brought Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power, but he was overthrown less than a year later by the armed forces, who installed a military dictatorship. Filled with fears of repression and economic hardship, tens of thousands of Haitians boarded any vessel, no matter how unseaworthy, and tried to reach the U.S. shore, particularly Florida. Both the Bush and Clinton administrations resisted admitting Haitian refugees, even though candidate Clinton had criticized Bush for turning refugees back at sea. In 1993, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Coast Guard could return to Haiti any Haitian picked up at sea, and President Clinton ordered anyone who made it to shore to be detained and sent to a camp at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

This practice kept Haitians in refugee status, rather than the more politically explosive status of asylee.

The logistics were complex and difficult, especially given the large number of people involved (the Coast Guard intercepted at least 40,000). Finally in 1994, President Clinton was on the verge of ordering an invasion of Haiti when the military government left power and Aristide was reinstalled. All refugees were then sent back. Ten years later, when rebels took up arms against Aristide, the refugee issue returned. Fearing overthrow and hoping to spur on another U.S. invasion in his favor, Aristide threatened that a wave of refugees would soon be on its way if no one acted to help him. The Bush administration chose to wait until Aristide fled the country and then began sending U.S. Marines to maintain order and prevent refugee flight. This was more controversial than in 1994, with protests that the United States had simply ousted Aristide.

Haiti once again faced disaster in 2010 when the strongest earthquake in the country's history struck. In response, the Department of Homeland Security granted Temporary Protected Status to any Haitians already in the United States, since returning them would make the situation even worse. That status has been renewed several times. The U.S. government is always concerned about a mass exodus, though it seemed that the international response to the crisis (which included other Latin American countries) precluded that from happening.

The Economic Impact of Immigration

In the United States, immigrants are a source of cheaper labor, a workforce that makes fewer demands than native-born workers, but the economic impact of immigration has been increasingly important for Latin American economies. Mention has already been made of remittances, the money earned by immigrants in the United States and sent back home to waiting families, which have exceeded \$60 billion a year. These "migra-dollars" can play an essential role in economic well-being in the home country, even to the point of reducing infant mortality by raising the standard of living.

Remittances have become so critical to some Latin American economies that governments have begun discussing them openly. For example, after September 11, 2001, the president of El Salvador, Francisco Flores, launched a massive ad campaign to educate Salvadorans about potential changes in U.S. immigration policy and warn them to be vigilant about any changes that might erect an obstacle to remittances. The campaign included recorded telephone calls from President Flores to the 750,000 Salvadorans residing in the United States to remind them of the importance of the \$2 billion that was wired every year to El Salvador. Every Salvadoran campaign now includes stops in the United States, especially since 2013 legislation granted citizens the right to vote from abroad. Both money and votes matter a great deal.

The most common way to send remittances is through wire transfers via companies like Western Union. Technology is rapidly offering new means as well, such as debit cards. Thousands of transactions take place every day, often through Hispanic stores and markets that have been opened across the United States to offer immigrants the products they want from home and to provide an easy and more comfortable way to send their wages home, without concerns about feeling intimidated by stores where Spanish is not spoken.

Both costs and benefits are associated with remittances. The positive side centers on the boost to the local economy. Locals have money to spend that cannot be gained by a job in the home country, and when the amounts are large, the total contribution to the national economy is significant, accounting for a strikingly large percentage (10 to 15 percent of GDP in some countries) of the gross national product. From the U.S. side, advocates of reducing remittance costs also make the point that they represent an alternative to economic aid, which does not necessarily reach the people who need it most because it has to filter through government bureaucracies, some of which are riddled with corruption.

One potential problem is economic dependence on remittances, which can fluctuate according to the U.S. economy, as well as U.S. immigration law. Although the home economy can benefit in the short term, in the longer term it is more vulnerable to sudden drops in remittance sending. In countries like Mexico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and much of Central America where this type of dependence is extensive and well established, many families (and by extension their governments) have come to count on unimpeded access to this money, which will not necessarily continue indefinitely. Dependency theorists would anticipate this outcome, because Latin American economies have remained strongly attached to the United States, and thus remittances constitute yet another factor in an overall highly unbalanced relationship. Furthermore, U.S. policy decisions can largely determine the continued movement of money.

Latin American presidents and policy makers have a vested interest in ensuring not only that immigrants from their country are treated humanely, but also that immigrants who want to work in the United States are allowed to do so. Remittances are an obvious source of income, but the ability of unemployed workers to leave countries like Mexico takes pressure off governments that are struggling to provide jobs for their citizens. Employment in the United States thus provides a safety valve to forestall protests at home. However, more and more studies are also demonstrating that the flow of immigrants can have a decidedly negative impact in Latin America, as communities are depleted and children are left without two parents (or in some cases, without both parents). More children are also coming unaccompanied to the border, which is a humanitarian crisis.

Steps are being taken to cultivate more dialogue about immigration, including immigration within Latin American countries. For example, the

Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) was created in 1996 to address migration-related issues in a multilateral forum. Its members are Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and the United States. In addition, Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Jamaica, and Peru have observer status. Although the RCM does not exert any control over member countries' policies, at the very least its meetings have highlighted the need to resolve problems such as smuggling, human rights abuses (especially among women and children), and the general safety of immigrants.

Summary and Conclusion

Immigration is one of the most sensitive issues in U.S.–Latin American relations, especially for Mexico. Although U.S. citizens consider their country a “nation of immigrants,” they have often favored policies to restrict immigration, and the “huddled masses” do not necessarily find open arms when they arrive. This is true even of many legal immigrants, but is especially evident with undocumented immigrants.

Because foreign policy is driven to a considerable extent by public opinion, U.S. immigration policy is intermestic. As realism would suggest, the United States uses power to pursue economic development and national security, but realism applies less well, given the highly complex and often changing perceptions in the United States about how to achieve those interests. It is also clear that power alone has not proved efficient in stemming illegal immigration. The U.S. government periodically admits that it has been able to do little.

After an initial unrestricted period, from the 1870s until the 1940s, U.S. immigration policy became gradually more restrictive. In the latter half of the twentieth century, the U.S. government did not craft any coherent or consistent strategies to address either legal or illegal immigration from Latin America, and instead responded in an ad hoc manner according to shifting pressures from the general population, businesses, and immigrant advocate groups. The Bracero program, for example, was begun when World War II created a labor shortage in the United States but was abruptly concluded in 1964, when unemployment ended any support for immigrant workers.

The passage of IRCA in 1986, with its inclusion of an amnesty, was intended to stem the tide of illegal immigrants, but in the past several decades the number of Latin American immigrants seeking to come into the United States illegally has continued to grow. The attacks of September 11, 2001 temporarily derailed U.S.–Mexico dialogue over border issues, as security became the main priority for U.S. policy makers, and talks have been difficult to reestablish. Plus, members of the U.S. Congress have been consistently unable to agree on any substantive immigration reform.

The supply and demand sides—the push and pull—of immigration demonstrate the obstacles to curtailing the number of immigrants, especially those who are illegal. The number of Latin Americans desiring to come to the United States remains high, as does the demand of U.S. employers for those workers. The many efforts to curb illegal immigration, including substantially beefing up border security, have generally not proved successful.

Immigration is also affecting the economies of many countries in the hemisphere, especially in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. Millions of dollars are wired every day from the United States, and these remittances are becoming an integral part of the economies of some Latin American countries. Remittances provide both opportunities and obstacles for those economies, but either way they represent a significant effect of Latin American immigration to the United States.

Research Questions

1. Does the United States have a consistent policy toward Latin American refugees? To what degree do domestic political concerns drive that policy?
2. Analyze why the U.S. government periodically grants amnesties to illegal immigrants.
3. What are the dangers faced by immigrants trying to enter the United States illegally? What policies have been put in place to address those dangers?
4. Have there been any clear patterns to U.S. immigration policy toward Mexico after the end of the *bracero* program in 1964?
5. Discuss the economic impact of remittances in several different Latin American countries. To what degree have governments begun to rely on them?

Notes

- 1 Brown 2014.
- 2 Weeks and Weeks 2010.
- 3 Chavez 2008.
- 4 Quoted in Calavita 1994, 58.
- 5 Public Papers 1983, 1489.
- 6 Public Papers 1983, 1644–1645.
- 7 Massey et al. 2002, 128–129.
- 8 Clinton 2004, 756.
- 9 Suárez-Orozco 1999, 232.
- 10 Massey et al. 2002, 84.
- 11 Quoted in Reimers 1998, 133.

- 12 Quoted in Reimers 1998, 131–132.
- 13 Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute website.
- 14 Quoted in Holden and Zolov 2000, 334.
- 15 National Conference of State Legislatures website.
- 16 Quoted in Castañeda 2007, 78–79.
- 17 Weiner 2003.
- 18 Huntington 2004, 30.
- 19 United States Department of State 2013, Refugee Admissions Program.
- 20 United States Citizenship and Immigration Services website.
- 21 Quoted in Masud-Piloto, 83.

Further Sources

Books

- Eckstein, Susan Eva. *The Immigrant Divide: How Cuban Americans Changed the U.S. and Their Homeland* (New York: Routledge, 2009). Eckstein shows how Cuban migrants had lasting influences, but also how different eras of migration entailed different types of impacts. Adaptation and assimilation have changed communities in the United States (especially Miami), but also Cuban Americans' view of Cuba.
- García, María Cristina. *Seeking Refuge: Central American Migration to Mexico, the United States, and Canada* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006). This is an excellent historical and analytic work on the forces shaping Central American migration. It looks not only at the migrants but also the ways in which policies in receiving countries were forged.
- Henderson, Timothy. *Beyond Borders: A History of Mexican Migration to the United States* (New York: Wiley, 2011). This is a well-written and judicious account of the development of Mexican migration to the United States, continuing on into the present. In particular, Henderson is very careful to describe specific causes and effects—both intended and unintended—of immigration policy choices.
- Massey, Douglas S., Jorge Durand, and Nolan J. Malone. *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002). The book provides a concise discussion not only of the history of Mexican immigration to the United States, but also of the precise ways in which U.S. immigration policies have failed. It concludes with a vision of what more effective policies would look like.
- Nevens, Joseph. *Operation Gatekeeper and Beyond: The War on “Illegals” and the Remaking of the U.S.–Mexico Boundary*, 2nd edn (New York: Routledge, 2010). This book centers on the criminalization of immigration, with an analysis of the growth of border enforcement. It includes discussion of culture, which migrants are often seen as threatening.

Websites

- Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute.** This is a non profit organization created by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. It provides documents, press releases, publications, and policy recommendations on a wide range of issues, with immigration prominent. <http://www.chci.org/>

Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR). The homepage of a large, strongly anti-immigration organization. It includes articles on a wide range of immigration topics, all of which are geared to demonstrating its harmful effects. <http://www.fairus.org/>

ImmigrationProf Blog. An excellent source of news analysis, legal opinion, book reviews, and other information related to immigration. It is not dedicated solely to Latin American migration but has a tremendous amount of material on the topic. <http://lawprofessors.typepad.com/immigration/>

National Council of La Raza. The website of a prominent advocacy group for Hispanic Americans. It includes discussions of farm worker rights, U.S. immigration policies (and U.S. foreign policy more generally), social security, welfare reform, and other issues. <http://www.nclr.org/>

Pew Hispanic Center. The Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan think tank, and this website is the best place for updated analysis of Latino issues in the United States, including reports, statistics, poll data, and news. <http://www.pewhispanic.org/>

United States Census Bureau, Immigration. The Census Bureau homepage can be reached at www.census.gov, but going directly to the immigration page provides access to data, reports, and working papers on international immigration and the foreign-born population (both current and projected) in the United States. <http://www.census.gov/population/intmigration/>

Human Rights and Democracy

Timeline

- 1948** United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- 1961** Amnesty International formed
- 1969** American Convention on Human Rights ratified
- 1975** Helsinki Accords
- 1976** Amnesty International issued first report on Latin America (Uruguay)
- 1990** Last Latin American dictator (Chile) left power
- 1998** International Criminal Court signed; Augusto Pinochet arrested
- 2002** Varela Project delivered petition to Cuban government
- 2009** Alan Gross arrested in Cuba
- 2009** Cuba offered readmission to the OAS

The protection of human rights in Latin America, a region historically beset by civil strife, military actions, and foreign intervention, has been a difficult task. This chapter addresses human rights in the context of the construction of norms and agreements by U.S. and Latin American governments. As a realist perspective would suggest, the United States has been slow to include any aspect of human rights into its foreign policy, because this very often conflicts with pervading views on security and sovereignty. During the Cold War, the same was often true of Latin American governments, but in the past few decades, a renewed emphasis on human rights in Latin America has yielded new regional agreements. One critical question for the future is whether the

United States will set aside its concerns and become a signatory to many of those agreements, even if doing so does not serve any national interest. Realist theory suggests that this is unlikely, given the reluctance to delegate any authority to a nonstate actor, but there is evidence that significant changes are indeed taking place. Another question is how the United States will adapt in the long term to the development of human rights institutions that exclude it.

The issue of human rights can also be fruitfully viewed in liberal institutional terms. In the post–World War II era, international institutions—through the UN, the OAS, or other regional organizations—have emerged and exert independent influence on sovereign countries. In that view, even if power is still a central component of international politics, governments are constrained by the evolution of new international norms about how people should be treated. There may not be agreement about how these norms should be precisely interpreted or when they call for action, but they cannot be ignored. This can be seen as a major accomplishment for Latin American leaders, in that it imposes a brake on U.S. actions while simultaneously empowering groups that in the past were ignored and marginalized.

Origins of Human Rights in International Law

Until World War II, the United States did not include human rights in its foreign policy toward Latin America or any other part of the world. The agony and atrocity of that war prompted the creation of the United Nations, and the United States took the lead in crafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. That lengthy document set forth many aspects of human rights, but the essence is individual liberty. As Article 1 states, “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights,” and Article 3 asserts, “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.”¹ The only way in which liberty can be restricted is laid out in Article 10: “a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.”

Many Latin American leaders were concerned that U.S. involvement in the UN would dampen its interest in the OAS and so pushed for a number of agreements to make it permanent. In addition to documents such as the Rio Treaty, the Organization of American States codified the same rights as the UN’s in 1948 with the “American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man.” Its preamble uses the same wording as the UN’s article 1, and its own first article is taken verbatim from Article 3. In human rights, as well as many other issues, the OAS was intended to serve a similar function to the UN, but on a regional scale.

Coming on the heels of the Good Neighbor Policy, it appeared as if U.S.–Latin American relations might have turned a new corner. But as Chapter 5 illustrated, the Cold War quickly overshadowed all else, and the invasion of Guatemala, with the subsequent funding and support for military regimes, came only six years after the United States supported the idea of making human rights a global concept. When the war against Communism arrived in Latin America, the idea of wielding U.S. influence to protect human rights seemed absurd to policy makers, who came to view such an idea as subversive in itself. If you advocated human rights—such as protecting people who wanted to protest—then you were likely a shill for international Communism, and thus you were aiding and abetting the enemy, even if unwittingly. Added to the mix was the persistent belief, outlined in previous chapters, that Latin Americans themselves were culturally prone to abusing each other, so there was little point in the United States trying to stop it.

Human rights were therefore absent from U.S. policy for several decades, and the U.S. public showed no inclination to pressure their elected representatives in that direction. Gripped by fear of Communist aggression, popular opinion mostly supported U.S. intervention in Latin America for many years and was not concerned about the existence of dictatorships if they kept the United States “safer.” Invasions received relatively little scrutiny and it took years for the media to view the issue critically.

Nor was human rights much of an issue for Latin American presidents and military leaders, who, to varying degrees, also believed that the potential threat of instability and/or internal “subversion” precluded such niceties. Even in Chile, which had one of the strongest histories of democracy in the region in the postwar period, the 1948 Law for the Permanent Defense of Democracy outlawed the Communist party and, especially when combined with already existing emergency power legislation, legalized the systematic harassment of domestic opposition. Constitutions in Chile and elsewhere routinely allowed for the suspension of civil liberties in times of “emergency.”²² This meant that the president could declare an emergency (for varying amounts of time) and use the military and police at will under what was essentially martial law. Weaving human rights into the fabric of politics would have to wait—and in some cases, the waiting continues.

Nonetheless, human rights gradually became more prominent in international agreements. Ratified in 1969, the American Convention on Human Rights is a comprehensive document on civil and political rights; economic, social, and cultural rights were not addressed until almost two decades later in the Protocol of San Salvador. The American Convention on Human Rights covers a wide range of rights: personal liberties, due process of law, freedom of religious expression, of thought and expression, assembly and association, as well as rejection of the death penalty (with a caveat for countries that currently had the death penalty). President Jimmy Carter signed the treaty in 1977, but it was not ratified by the U.S. Senate.

Box 11.1 American Convention on Human Rights (1969)

ARTICLE 1. OBLIGATION TO RESPECT RIGHTS

1. The States Parties to this Convention undertake to respect the rights and freedoms recognized herein and to ensure to all persons subject to their jurisdiction the free and full exercise of those rights and freedoms, without any discrimination for reasons of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic status, birth, or any other social condition. ...

ARTICLE 4. RIGHT TO LIFE

1. Every person has the right to have his life respected. This right shall be protected by law and, in general, from the moment of conception. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life.
2. In countries that have not abolished the death penalty, it may be imposed only for the most serious crimes and pursuant to a final judgment rendered by a competent court and in accordance with a law establishing such punishment, enacted prior to the commission of the crime. The application of such punishment shall not be extended to crimes to which it does not presently apply.
3. The death penalty shall not be reestablished in states that have abolished it.
4. In no case shall capital punishment be inflicted for political offenses or related common crimes. ...

ARTICLE 7. RIGHT TO PERSONAL LIBERTY

1. Every person has the right to personal liberty and security.
2. No one shall be deprived of his physical liberty except for the reasons and under the conditions established beforehand by the constitution of the State Party concerned or by a law established pursuant thereto.
3. No one shall be subject to arbitrary arrest or imprisonment.
4. Anyone who is detained shall be informed of the reasons for his detention and shall be promptly notified of the charge or charges against him.
5. Any person detained shall be brought promptly before a judge or other officer authorized by law to exercise judicial power and shall be entitled to trial within a reasonable time or to be released without prejudice to the continuation of the proceedings. His release may be subject to guarantees to assure his appearance for trial.
6. Anyone who is deprived of his liberty shall be entitled to recourse to a competent court, in order that the court may decide without delay on the lawfulness of his arrest or detention and order his release if the arrest or detention is unlawful. ...

7. No one shall be detained for debt. This principle shall not limit the orders of a competent judicial authority issued for nonfulfillment of duties of support. ...

ARTICLE 12. FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE AND RELIGION

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of conscience and of religion. This right includes freedom to maintain or to change one's religion or beliefs, and freedom to profess or disseminate one's religion or beliefs, either individually or together with others, in public or in private.
2. No one shall be subject to restrictions that might impair his freedom to maintain or to change his religion or beliefs.

ARTICLE 13. FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought and expression. This right includes freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing, in print, in the form of art, or through any other medium of one's choice.
2. The exercise of the right provided for in the foregoing paragraph shall not be subject to prior censorship but shall be subject to subsequent imposition of liability, which shall be expressly established by law to the extent necessary to ensure:
 - a. respect for the rights or reputations of others; or
 - b. the protection of national security, public order, or public health or morals.
3. The right of expression may not be restricted by indirect methods or means, such as the abuse of government or private controls over newsprint, radio broadcasting frequencies, or equipment used in the dissemination of information, or by any other means tending to impede the communication and circulation of ideas and opinions.

ARTICLE 15. RIGHT OF ASSEMBLY

The right of peaceful assembly, without arms, is recognized. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and necessary in a democratic society in the interest of national security, public safety or public order, or to protect public health or morals or the rights or freedom of others.

ARTICLE 16. FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

1. Everyone has the right to associate freely for ideological, religious, political, economic, labor, social, cultural, sports, or other purposes.

2. The exercise of this right shall be subject only to such restrictions established by law as may be necessary in a democratic society, in the interest of national security, public safety or public order, or to protect public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others.
3. The provisions of this article do not bar the imposition of legal restrictions, including even deprivation of the exercise of the right of association, on members of the armed forces and the police. ...

Source: <http://www.cidh.oas.org/basicos/english/basic3.american%20convention.htm>

Between 1973 and 1975, thirty-five countries (including the United States and the Soviet Union) gathered in Helsinki, Finland for the first meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, which culminated in the 1975 Helsinki Accords. The purpose of the meetings was to defuse tensions between the two major powers, with agreements reached on peaceful settlement of disputes and refraining from the use of force. In addition, however, the Helsinki Accords outlined key civil rights such as freedoms of expression, belief, and thought, as well as avoiding discrimination on the basis of gender, race, religion, or minority status.

The result was that although U.S. presidents tended to dismiss the issue, they were unable to avoid it entirely. In fact, the Helsinki Accords were intended to highlight pervasive human rights violations in the Soviet Union, which therefore kept human rights on the U.S. policy radar. In other words, the United States found it harder to ignore the abuses of its allies (including many in Latin America) when it was publicly criticizing similar abuses committed by its adversary. There was still strong resistance, however, to making human rights a part of U.S. policy toward any non-Communist area of the world. Cuba was thus frequently a target of U.S. rhetoric, but U.S.-supported military governments were not. Still, in 1974 and 1975, Congress did begin calling on the State Department to issue reports on the human rights record of countries receiving security assistance.

A Human Rights Interregnum: President Jimmy Carter

In 1977, President Jimmy Carter took office in the aftermath of the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal that forced President Richard Nixon to resign. Public confidence in the government was low, and cynicism about foreign policy was high. Especially among Democrats, the 1975 Church Committee also had an important impact, as it highlighted the direct ways in which administrations had worked to undermine democracy (even by assassination) and promote military governments.

During the Nixon and Ford administrations, some Democrats in Congress had made various efforts to block aid to dictatorships, though they faced an uphill battle not only among their colleagues, but more firmly in the White House. Even during the Carter administration, Congress wavered. In 1977, for example, the House of Representatives voted to deny funds to the Argentine dictatorship, yet the very next day approved the restoration of aid to the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua. Carter also cut aid to Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Uruguay, which in turn led to complaints in Latin America about U.S. "interventionism." The president also worked personally to gain the release of political prisoners.

This was, many argued, the only way the United States could get the attention of repressive governments, which would listen not to airy speeches but only to the cold reality of being denied money. Opponents argued that not only was it a blatant case of interventionism, but also that Latin American militaries would simply find other countries that did not make human rights a sticking point, where they could purchase weapons and spare parts and develop training programs. From that perspective, security should simply trump human rights.

In 1977, President Carter created the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, which would later become the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, thus placing human rights in a more prominent (and official) position within the U.S. government. A commission headed by Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) had recommended its creation back in 1968, but both Congress and the Nixon and Ford administrations gave it little support. The position of "coordinator" for human rights existed briefly at the end of the Ford administration (though the coordinator did virtually nothing), but Carter brought it to the cabinet level, and its staff and prominence grew. It now includes a Human Rights and Democracy Fund, allocating over \$200 million for projects around the world, such as election monitoring, human rights documentation, strengthening women's advocacy groups, and creating the office of a special prosecutor.

The response in Latin America to President Carter's initiatives was decidedly mixed, given the varieties of democracies and dictatorships in the region in the late 1970s. In Chile, Augusto Pinochet called for a national plebiscite in 1978 in the face of several U.S. policy shifts. In December 1975, the Kennedy Amendment (named for Senator Edward Kennedy, who had taken a special interest in Chile) became law, which prohibited Chile from receiving military aid or training and from purchasing weapons (though Secretary of State Kissinger added a number of weapons to already existing contracts, saying that the new law did not cover them). Then in 1977, the United States cosponsored a United Nations resolution condemning human rights abuses in Chile (the Nixon and Ford administrations tended to abstain from such votes). Presidents Carter and Pinochet had met at the Panama Canal signing ceremony in 1977, where Carter had made plain the need for UN human

rights observers in Chile. Pinochet's own rage at this affront was clear when he called for the plebiscite, which was worded:

In the face of the international aggression unleashed against the government of the fatherland, I support [General] Pinochet in his defense of the dignity of Chile, and I reaffirm the legitimate right of the republic to conduct the process of institutionalization in a manner befitting its sovereignty.³

President Carter had spurred real interest in democratization and human rights that did not disappear after he left office. Even during the Reagan administration, the U.S. Congress became more active in denying funds to Latin American governments that systematically violated human rights. As one former Foreign Service Officer and human rights activist notes, "While there was no spurt of congressionally initiated legislation as in the mid-1970s, the strengthening of the Kennedy Amendment showed how much ground those concerned with human rights had gained in Congress."⁴

There were already antidictatorial voices coming from Latin America, and they gained steam in the 1980s. Perhaps the most vocal was Costa Rican President Oscar Arias Sánchez, who played an important role in mediating the deadly conflicts in El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. The Nicaraguan civil war was especially problematic, because the Reagan administration long refused to negotiate with what it considered an outlaw Communist regime. With Arias's leadership, in 1987 progress was made and a peace plan put into place. For his efforts, Arias received the Nobel Peace Prize that same year. In an impassioned speech accepting the award, Arias spoke directly to the powerful countries waging ideological war: "let Central Americans decide the future of Central America. Leave the interpretation of and the compliance with the Peace Plan to us."

The Role of Nongovernmental Organizations

Especially when dictatorships reigned widely in Latin America, the most important actors addressing human rights were not necessarily associated with governments, but rather were nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Dedicated to the rights of the oppressed and frustrated by government inaction or dissembling, they moved to fill what they viewed as the vacuum of leadership.

Until the 1970s, NGOs remained largely peripheral to policy making in Washington, D.C. They lacked the resources and experience necessary to lobby effectively. But as international protests against dictatorship and repression spread, so did the NGOs. The most well known, Amnesty International, was founded in 1961 by a British lawyer trying to free two Portuguese citizens imprisoned for political reasons by their military

government. Its work, based on the tenets of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, became so widely recognized that it was granted the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977. It was only in 1976, however, that it opened an office in Washington, D.C., and worked to make abuses in Latin America a priority. Its first report on Latin America centered on torture in Uruguay, and with the help of Congressman Ed Koch (D-NY), that information was put directly into the Congressional Record.

There are other important human rights NGOs as well. Human Rights Watch was created in 1978 to monitor whether Soviet bloc countries were abiding by the Helsinki Accords, but subsequently it took on a life of its own. The Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) was founded in 1974 as a reaction against U.S. support for dictatorships in the hemisphere. More so than other NGOs, its explicit purpose is to influence legislation.

Prominent domestic NGOs in Latin America have included the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo (Argentina); the Vicaria de Solidaridad, a Catholic church-based human rights group in Chile during the Pinochet dictatorship; the Academy of Human Rights in Mexico; the Fundación Arias in Costa Rica; and the Comisión Andina de Juristas in Peru. In the past several decades, the list of such organizations has become very long.

These and many other NGOs also formed part of an international human rights network, and the 1973 coup in Chile was the "watershed moment" for the creation of that network.⁵ NGOs had already begun the work of placing human rights abuses in the context of international law, and Latin American organizations began to form and work closely together. Aside from working with sympathetic legislators (in all countries) to bring Latin American human rights issues into focus, publicity is perhaps the greatest lever these NGOs have. The human rights networks collected information and stories from many of the people who had suffered, which was then disseminated to the entire world through avenues like news stories, thus putting pressure on governments to take action. This is referred to as "leveraging."⁶ Through leveraging, "ordinary persons without political power convince a spokesperson more powerful than themselves to deal with authorities."⁷

These networks included parts of intergovernmental organizations, churches, international NGOs, domestic NGOs, private foundations, and parts of some governments. Members of these groups played a greater role in drafting international law than has often been acknowledged, working both at the United Nations and the Organization of American States from their beginnings. In this way, "international human rights pressures can lead to changes in human rights practices, helping to transform understandings about the nature of a state's sovereign authority over its citizens."⁸

During the 1980s, the number and diversity of such networks expanded, which made them more effective in producing changes of policy by both

governments and international organizations (such as the OAS). Successful publicizing meant they were also able to raise more funds, both private and public.

By the 1990s, it was more difficult for the United States or the OAS to paper over human rights violations or unconstitutional changes of government in the region. Although such changes did occur (e.g., in Peru in 1990, Ecuador in 2000, or Honduras in 2009), the outcry was far greater than in the past, and as a result some similar efforts failed (e.g., Guatemala in 1993 and Paraguay in 1996). This evolving view of human rights did not end human rights problems or threats to democracy, but it was a major improvement over the past.

The NGOs have worked closely with OAS institutions such as the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Although many Latin American NGOs and human rights groups have the information necessary to lodge complaints, they lack the legal experience and money to construct a legal case while also paying for witnesses and lawyers to attend hearings. Currently, the IACHR does not pay for any of those activities, so they often fall on the shoulders of wealthier NGOs based in the United States. Instead, it has a small amount of money available only to people who present a petition to the IACHR and lack their own resources.

The NGOs have also contributed to a better understanding of the dilemmas faced by groups in Latin America who traditionally had received little attention, such as women and indigenous groups. Marginalized in their own societies and bereft of international attention, in NGOs these groups found recognition that their rights were equally as important as everyone else's.

In South America, military dictatorships usually brought with them very conservative notions about the "proper" role of women in society and politics. For example, in 1975 the president of Uruguay announced that his country would not participate in UN activities celebrating International Women's Year because they would serve to "aggressively launch women into the arena of political battles that are occurring in the world today. ... It is clear that at the root of all these attempts there is a materialist philosophy and underlying them is the Marxist conception of state and society ... to which we can in no way adhere."⁹

Until the early 1980s, violence against women was not on the agenda for the women's movement or for international human rights groups, in Latin America or elsewhere. The United Nations first addressed the issue in 1985, but in Latin America the OAS Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women was not signed until 1994. It called on states not only to protect women from physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, but also to call attention to the problem, change their laws, and even modify the very cultural contexts that tolerated such abuse. The inclusion of women's issues under the rubric of human rights has thus been slow, but nonetheless steady.

Box 11.2 Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women (1994)

ARTICLE 1

For the purposes of this Convention, violence against women shall be understood as any act or conduct, based on gender, which causes death or physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, whether in the public or the private sphere.

ARTICLE 2

Violence against women shall be understood to include physical, sexual and psychological violence:

- a. that occurs within the family or domestic unit or within any other interpersonal relationship, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the woman, including, among others, rape, battery and sexual abuse;
- b. that occurs in the community and is perpetrated by any person, including, among others, rape, sexual abuse, torture, trafficking in persons, forced prostitution, kidnapping and sexual harassment in the workplace, as well as in educational institutions, health facilities or any other place; and
- c. that is perpetrated or condoned by the state or its agents regardless of where it occurs.

ARTICLE 7

The States Parties condemn all forms of violence against women and agree to pursue, by all appropriate means and without delay, policies to prevent, punish and eradicate such violence and undertake to:

- a. refrain from engaging in any act or practice of violence against women and to ensure that their authorities, officials, personnel, agents, and institutions act in conformity with this obligation;
- b. apply due diligence to prevent, investigate and impose penalties for violence against women;
- c. include in their domestic legislation penal, civil, administrative and any other type of provisions that may be needed to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women and to adopt appropriate administrative measures where necessary;
- d. adopt legal measures to require the perpetrator to refrain from harassing, intimidating or threatening the woman or using any method that harms or endangers her life or integrity, or damages her property;

- e. take all appropriate measures, including legislative measures, to amend or repeal existing laws and regulations or to modify legal or customary practices which sustain the persistence and tolerance of violence against women;
- f. establish fair and effective legal procedures for women who have been subjected to violence which include, among others, protective measures, a timely hearing and effective access to such procedures;
- g. establish the necessary legal and administrative mechanisms to ensure that women subjected to violence have effective access to restitution, reparations or other just and effective remedies. ...

ARTICLE 8

The States Parties agree to undertake progressively specific measures, including programs:

- a. to promote awareness and observance of the right of women to be free from violence, and the right of women to have their human rights respected and protected;
- b. to modify social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, including the development of formal and informal educational programs appropriate to every level of the educational process, to counteract prejudices, customs and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes or on the stereotyped roles for men and women which legitimize or exacerbate violence against women;
- c. to promote the education and training of all those involved in the administration of justice, police and other law enforcement officers as well as other personnel responsible for implementing policies for the prevention, punishment and eradication of violence against women;
- d. to provide appropriate specialized services for women who have been subjected to violence, through public and private sector agencies, including shelters, counseling services for all family members where appropriate, and care and custody of the affected children;
- e. to promote and support governmental and private sector education designed to raise the awareness of the public with respect to the problems of and remedies for violence against women;
- f. to provide women who are subjected to violence access to effective readjustment and training programs to enable them to fully participate in public, private and social life;
- g. to encourage the communications media to develop appropriate media guidelines in order to contribute to the eradication of violence against women in all its forms, and to enhance respect for the dignity of women.

ARTICLE 9

With respect to the adoption of the measures in this Chapter, the States Parties shall take special account of the vulnerability of women to violence by reason of, among others, their race or ethnic background or their status as migrants, refugees or displaced persons. Similar consideration shall be given to women subjected to violence while pregnant or who are disabled, of minor age, elderly, socioeconomically disadvantaged, affected by armed conflict or deprived of their freedom.

Source: OAS website, <http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/treaties/a-61.html>

Indigenous groups had traditionally been mistreated irrespective of the type of government in power, and they have received more than token attention only in the past several decades. Largely as a result, their only avenue for political change has been rebellion, which in turn has brought a negative reaction from Latin American governments and the United States. In recent years, indigenous demands were at the heart of a coup in Ecuador (2000) and the forced departure of Bolivian presidents (2003 and 2005), while the Mexican Zapatistas continue to make their demands for land reform and autonomy in Chiapas. In these and other countries, indigenous groups are exerting greater political power, which can be directed against U.S. free trade, foreign investment, and drug policies.

The challenge of asserting indigenous rights is exemplified by the inability of the OAS to forge an agreement. The Proposed American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was drafted in 1997, eight years after the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights began discussing it; the original intent was to assert indigenous rights in recognition of the 500th anniversary of Europe's arrival in the region in 1492. The proposal has yet to be completed. Although all countries in the hemisphere have offered objections and suggestions, as have indigenous organizations, one problem for the United States is the notion, as stated by the U.S. delegate in 2002, that the document "should not set forth an obligation since this is a declaration, an expression of aspirations, and not a convention," and that "We also have difficulty with a requirement that states shall adopt special measures against discrimination; we prefer a formulation which encourages states to take measures. ..." ¹⁰ The point is that an "obligation" would potentially encroach on existing U.S. laws. The United States has often been reluctant (or simply unwilling) to ratify OAS agreements on human rights.

The Role of the OAS

Especially once the region's dictatorships (with the exception of Cuba) gave way to elected governments by 1990, the Organization of American States has crafted a number of resolutions intended to strengthen the hemisphere's commitment to the protection of human rights. As Table 11.1 demonstrates, the United States has declined to ratify any of them after the Carter administration, while the thirty-four other countries in the hemisphere have been far more willing.

The argument against ratification centers on sovereignty and the possible authority that such agreements could exert over U.S. citizens. Both executives and legislators (from both political parties) in the United States have argued against allowing any court outside their borders to exert any authority, arguing that such an arrangement could even prove unconstitutional. For example, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger wrote that the United Nation's International Criminal Court (which could call citizens of any country to stand trial for "gross violations" of international law), created in 1998, "represents such a fundamental change in U.S. constitutional practice that a full national debate and the full participation of Congress are imperative."¹¹ Kissinger's personal interest in the matter is considerable, as his support for the Chilean coup and dictatorship has often been cited as a potential case for the ICC.

Table 11.1 Major OAS Documents on Human Rights (as of 2014)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Latin American Ratifications</i>	<i>Ratified by United States?</i>
American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man (1948)	34 (just approval of declaration)	Yes (just approval of nonbinding declaration)
American Convention on Human Rights (1969)	25	No (but signed in 1977)
Inter-American Convention to Prevent and Punish Torture (1985)	18	No
Protocol to the ACHR to Abolish the Death Penalty (1990)	13	No
Inter-American Convention on Forced Disappearance of Persons (1994)	15	No
Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women (1994)	32	No
Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (1999)	19	No

Source: OAS website, <http://www.oas.org>

For the same reasons, until 2006 the United States not only refused to ratify the ICC, but sought to punish countries that did not agree to provide waivers for the U.S. military, so it becomes a security issue as well. Colombia, for example, is a signatory to the ICC and was threatened with a cut in aid in 2003. Eventually the Colombian government convinced the United States that all security and aid personnel were already protected by a 1962 agreement between the two countries. The incident underlined the continued concern of the United States with the dictates of international human rights law. Other countries—such as Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama—agreed to exempt U.S. nationals from the ICC. Yet Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela all refused to acquiesce, thus accepting the potential loss of aid in the name of preserving sovereignty. Interestingly, in 2005 the head of U.S. Southern Command, Army General Bantz Craddock, argued against any military-related ICC penalties to a congressional panel, saying that they would have “unintended consequences” because Latin American militaries would go elsewhere for training.¹² Largely because of such resistance from the U.S. military, in 2006 restrictions on military aid were lifted for countries that still had not signed waivers.

Despite U.S. efforts to control it, international law has spread in unanticipated ways, such as when judges of one country issue arrest warrants for crimes not committed on their own soil. That is precisely what happened in October 1998 to Augusto Pinochet, the former president of the military government in Chile (1973–1990). Spanish judge Baltasar Garzón sent an international warrant for Pinochet’s arrest while the former dictator rested in London after back surgery. The charges were murder, conspiracy to murder, hostage taking, torture, and kidnapping. Pinochet would remain under house arrest for fifteen months while the British government deliberated about whether to extradite him to Spain.

In 2000, the British government found a loophole that would extricate it from the controversy by ruling that Pinochet—by virtue of age and health problems—suffered from “dementia” and therefore should be released. A Chilean Air Force plane was waiting, and the retired general was whisked away before any new arrest warrants (which were coming from other European countries) could be delivered.

Even though Pinochet was freed, the case reverberated globally, in a manner consistent with liberal institutional theory. In the past, the accused who were held under international law had been defeated in some manner (e.g., Nazis and the Nuremberg Trials or Rwandan Hutus facing the ICC), but Pinochet had never been defeated in battle and had enjoyed extensive support even within his own country. Human rights law was now moving—albeit with halting steps—toward eliminating impunity even for victors. The U.S. government remained opposed to giving up any sovereignty in such matters and followed Kissinger’s argument that international trials would

become politicized and used as platforms by biased judges for political purposes (though the Clinton administration did declassify a large number of documents that would be used in the Pinochet case). Ultimately, Pinochet died in December 2006 before any court could prosecute him, but his arrest opened the door in Chile for many more prosecutions and further investigations into his government.

Relations with Latin American Militaries

Especially after the Cold War began, one of the most troublesome human rights issues was the relationship between the U.S. government and the armed forces in Latin America. An explicit trade-off was made, whereby the United States accepted sometimes gross violations of human rights if they were committed in the name of combating the global threat of Communism. The fact that U.S. policy makers were well aware of the torture, deaths, and disappearances has already been addressed, but they rationalized that a Communist dictatorship would be worse. Human rights activists faced an uphill struggle to cut aid or otherwise call attention to the governments committing those abuses, especially in Central America.

With the exception of Costa Rica, which abolished its military in 1948, Central America suffered devastatingly violent civil wars and/or repressive governments during much of the Cold War. Particularly during the Reagan administration, military spending aimed at El Salvador and Honduras increased sharply. In El Salvador, the United States paid out \$300 million to \$500 million a year throughout much of the 1980s, and Honduras received \$100 million to \$300 million in the same period; these numbers do not include money spent on the Contras fighting the Nicaraguan government. In South America, the support was more symbolic than financial, as the United States helped to legitimize military rule but did not funnel through anywhere close to the same amount of money as it did in Central America. For Latin America as a whole, U.S. military spending actually decreased from the highs reached in the 1960s. Grant military aid (excluding El Salvador and Honduras) declined from an average of about \$110 million a year in 1969 to \$35 million in the mid-1980s. The number of Latin American soldiers coming to the United States for courses and training dropped from a high of 9,000 in 1962 to approximately 2,000 in the 1980s.

The precise influence of the U.S. government on Latin American militaries has been a matter of some dispute. Some commentators agree with the School of the Americas Watch, which argues that training at the SOA “has left a trail of blood and suffering in every country where its graduates have returned.”¹³ The training and the weapons have often been used for repression. Others counter that it is often difficult to trace a clear line between U.S. spending/training and the military’s activities, and that overall U.S. influence

underwent a decline from its high in the early Cold War. The abuses of School of the Americas graduates thus amount only to “a few foul balls,” in the words of a former SOA instructor.¹⁴ This was due in part because Congress began imposing limits on aid to countries with poor human rights records. When President Carter took office, he quickly moved to cut military aid to Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile, and over time he criticized and/or reduced funding to dictatorships across the region.

Yet it is indisputable that aside from aid and training, the United States offered its rhetorical support for many dictatorships and militaries that were clearly violating the human rights of their citizens. To U.S. presidents, dictatorships were nascent democracies facing sabotage from unpopular guerrillas, and groups like the Contras were simply “freedom fighters” trying to restore political and economic liberties to embattled Nicaraguans. Very often, U.S. officials gave clear “green light” signals to governments, a tacit understanding that the United States would not criticize the regime while it handled problems of mutual interest. The green light, sometimes even given privately, contradicted official statements about democracy and human rights.

The human toll in Latin American countries whose militaries received either concrete or tacit support from the U.S. government is stunning in its magnitude, especially as truth commissions complete the laborious task of counting the dead. More than 3,000 Chileans were killed for political reasons during the Pinochet years (1973–1990). In neighboring Argentina, 20,000 died during the 1976–1983 military government. When the FMLN geared up its activities in El Salvador in the early 1980s, the death toll reached upwards of 60,000. Between 1980 and 2000, 69,000 Peruvians were killed in the war against insurgencies. Between 1962 and 1996, 200,000 Guatemalans died, 90 percent at the hands of government forces.

These numbers do not register the vast numbers of people who were imprisoned, tortured, and otherwise abused, or the suffering of their families and friends, who waited anxiously to find out if they would survive. The psychological scars continue to run deep as well. In Ariel Dorfman’s play *Death and the Maiden* (1991), the protagonist encounters a man she believes was her torturer by recognizing his voice; she had always been blindfolded (she also identified him through the music he continually played, Schubert’s “Death and the Maiden”). She faces a whirlwind of emotions, most notably terror and retribution, and tries to decide whether to kill him. For many Latin Americans, the dictatorships came to an end, but the fear and psychological suffering did not.

In the 1990s, with the disappearance of the specter of Communism, U.S. policy toward Latin American militaries underwent changes. At the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, formerly the School of the Americas, human rights instruction has been integrated into every course. Where once soldiers were taught the “fallacies of Communist theory” in any class they took, now they are taught how to incorporate human rights awareness

into military operations, which, according to instructors at the school, “is actually the cutting edge of regional military teaching for the armed forces and the police in the applied Human Rights process.”¹⁵ From that perspective, the U.S. military is well equipped to teach Latin American soldiers how to combat threats while avoiding the excesses of the Cold War. Human rights activists remain highly skeptical.

The 1995 United States Regional Security Report of the Americas came out of the first meeting of defense ministers in the hemisphere, and it emphasized the goal not only of democratic elections, but also of democratic control of the armed forces. Subsequent meetings reiterated those points. As part of this overall effort at promoting democracy, the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (later renamed the William J. Perry Center for the former Defense Secretary) opened in 1997 in Washington, D.C. Its purpose is to educate both officers and civilians in democratic defense policy, including the nuts and bolts of forging military budgets.

Critics claim that institutions such as these serve no positive purpose; that regardless of their stated goals, they retain the essential element of teaching Latin American militaries how to control their own populations. Supporters, however, believe that inclusion of human rights and democracy can instill a greater sense of duty, honor, and respect for life in soldiers who otherwise might not learn such values. As one proponent put it, “The school’s [SOA] annual budget is less than that of a small junior college. In return, it averts wars that cost half a billion dollars a day.”¹⁶

The U.S. Congress also made its mark on military policy in recent years. For example, in 2000 it passed (and President Bill Clinton signed) a massive \$1.3 billion package of military and economic aid to Colombia (dubbed “Plan Colombia,” this is examined in Chapter 12). Congress insisted that a human rights certification be granted for military assistance to Colombia, and this certification would be made (or denied) after meetings conducted by the U.S. government and NGOs (including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the Washington Office on Latin America). Nonetheless, this example also demonstrates the limits of both congressional and NGO influence; the latter achieved consensus that the human rights conditions had not been met, but President Clinton decided later in the year to waive those conditions in the name of national security. As had happened many times in the past, the president’s perception of a security threat took precedence over everything else.

Nonetheless, the ways in which human rights became a normal part of the policy process both within the United States and across the hemisphere may allow a certain degree of optimism. Human rights issues can be contested, but they can no longer be ignored. As Kathryn Sikkink argues:

Outcomes still depend on political struggles, “fought out issue by issue, day by day,” where human rights advocates require skill, energy, and fortuitous

circumstances to prevail. A major accomplishment of the human rights movement has been to discipline and change U.S. foreign policy and subject its impact on human rights to scrutiny.¹⁷

This is in line with liberal institutional theory. The work by human rights activists increased the profile of the issue, and international agreements took it on. It is consequently more problematic for the United States to ignore it.

The Case of Cuba

Cuba is currently the sole dictatorship in Latin America, with far fewer political freedoms than elsewhere. The United States still follows its long-held course of cutting the country off with the embargo, though many restrictions were loosened by President Obama in 2014. Repression in Cuba has waxed and waned, with occasional sudden changes that either open up or close off personal liberties such as freedom of movement or entrepreneurship. The U.S. response was sometimes drastic during the administration of George W. Bush and typically less so under Barack Obama. Under all administrations since John F. Kennedy, the embargo has been a major part of U.S. policy.

A renewal of repression in Cuba during the Bush administration was linked to the development of the Varela Project. The Cuban constitution provides for a national referendum to be called if sufficient signatures are obtained. The Varela Project was a petition calling for democratization in Cuba, including freedom of speech and association, an amnesty for political prisoners, the ability to run private businesses, and free and fair elections. It therefore represented a total rejection of the Castro regime. Its sponsors delivered 11,000 signatures (and ultimately claimed to have 20,000) in May 2002, timing it precisely to be the day before former president Jimmy Carter was scheduled to arrive in Havana to meet with Fidel Castro.

The Cuban government rejected the petition, arguing that it misinterpreted the constitution, which it said did not allow citizens to amend the constitution themselves (the U.S. Constitution does not allow for such an action either). Castro also accused the United States of meddling in Cuban affairs, because the head of the U.S. Interest Section (in the absence of diplomatic relations, there is no embassy) James Cason had met with Cuban dissidents to discuss political transition. With provocative statements and connections to Castro opponents, Cason was transformed into a high-profile transmitter of the Bush administration's Cuba policy. Soon Castro also began cracking down on democratic activists, declaring them tools of Cason's machinations, which led to the roundup and imprisonment of dissidents.

As social media became more popular, a blogger named Yoani Sánchez began publicly challenging the Cuban government, not by calling for regime

change but by writing for the world about economic and political conditions on the island. As it turns out her blog, *Generation Y*, is not read widely within Cuba because Cubans have so little private access to the internet, but her message was broadcast globally. Her reach was enough to prompt the Cuban government to restrict her movement—both within and outside the country—for a time until the government finally loosened travel laws and she actually went abroad. As Human Rights Watch notes, since 2011 the Cuban government has used fewer long prison sentences and relaxed travel rules. Nonetheless, “the government of Raúl Castro continued to enforce political conformity using short-term detentions, beatings, public acts of repudiation, travel restrictions, and forced exile.”¹⁸

Prison also affected a U.S. citizen. Alan Gross was working as a contractor for the Agency for International Development. Over several trips to Cuba he brought a wide variety of equipment to set up wireless communication for the Jewish community. He was arrested in 2009 and sentenced to 15 years in prison on charges of espionage. To the Cuban government, Gross was working for a U.S. government that clearly wants the Castro regime removed. To his supporters in the United States, it was an example of a dictatorship using force to stifle communication. His situation drew much attention and became yet another bone of contention between the two countries, solved finally by his release in 2014 as part of the broader changes in U.S. policy.

Latin American Responses to Cuba

For many years, U.S. presidents have lobbied skeptical Latin American governments to support the embargo and to condemn Fidel Castro in international settings such as the OAS and the UN. In the OAS such efforts were easier during the Cold War, especially when military governments ruled a number of countries. Now Cuba’s diplomatic status is virtually normal. Latin American presidents of all ideological stripes attend meetings in Havana and support Cuba’s participation in international fora.

The prevailing view in Latin America is that U.S. policy is outdated. In a 2009 interview, OAS Chief José Miguel Insulza said, “I am concerned that we still have standing a resolution that punishes a country for being a member of the Soviet-Chinese axis, for being Marxist Leninist and several other things from the cold war.”¹⁹ Even governments that roundly reject socialism see no need to keep Cuba as a black sheep because of the United States.

The Cuban government was expelled from the OAS in 1962 and Castro routinely vilifies the organization as a tool of U.S. imperialism, to the point that he refused to accept when in 2009 the country was readmitted. The OAS has issued reports criticizing the human rights situation in Cuba. In

2013 the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights had sharp words for the Castro regime:

The restrictions on the political rights to association, freedom of expression, and dissemination of ideas, the lack of elections, the lack of an independent judiciary, and the restrictions on freedom of movement over decades have come to shape a permanent and systematic situation of violation of the human rights of the inhabitants of Cuba.²⁰

In many ways the Latin American reaction remains ambivalent, in large part due to a longstanding commitment (think back even to the Drago Doctrine) to nonintervention. Therefore there is criticism of Cuba's poor human rights record, but no appetite for taking any action.

The issue came up again in 2012 when Cuba expressed interest in attending a Summit of the Americas meeting in Colombia. Ecuador announced that it would encourage a boycott if Cuba was not invited, whereas the United States opposed Cuba's participation because inclusion required a commitment to representative democracy. Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos responded by telling Cuba that it could not participate that year, though future meetings would be considered. Panama hosted the following summit in 2015 and invited Cuba. Rumors swirled about the U.S. response, which was finally solved by the normalization of relations reached in late 2014.

The State of Democracy in Latin America

Certainly, liberal democracy is the political system most propitious for the respect of human rights, in which theoretically not only do citizens enjoy the full panoply of rights, but also all security forces are controlled by elected civilian authorities and are fully accountable for all their actions. With the exception of Cuba, Latin American governments are currently in power by virtue of reasonably free and fair (though in many cases very imperfect) elections, but the foundations of democracy are generally still weak. Control over the military and police remains an aspiration rather than an accomplishment, and large portions of the population are still marginalized, sometimes having no effective political voice at all.

Support for democracy has grown over time, though it remains shaky in some countries. According to the 2013 *Latinobarómetro* poll, there were six countries where support for democracy versus other types of systems was less than 50 percent.²¹ On the other hand, there were also seven countries where that support was 60 percent or higher. More troubling is that in almost all countries, somewhere between 10 and 20 percent of the population believes that in some circumstances authoritarian governments might be preferable to democratic ones.

We should note that even asking people about “democracy” is complicated. In the United States people tend to view democracy in terms of elections. However, this attitude varies widely in Latin America, where for many people democracy can mean redistribution and equity. In Venezuela, 87 percent saw democracy as the most preferable system, an increase from 68 percent in 2003. That upward change came not solely from elections but from the creation of a new political and economic system that individuals believed benefited them. This makes it more difficult to determine under what circumstances people will support authoritarian reversions.

For our purposes, the dilemma is that the rule of law undergirding human rights requires a democratic system, but support for democratic rule remains weak across the region. If people believe that democracy cannot resolve their economic problems, then they are more likely to support some type of political system (even if not necessarily a traditional military dictatorship) that is prone to ignore both regional and international human rights laws and conventions. That is central to the debate over how democratic Venezuela has been under Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro where, for example, popular support for democracy is high even as the government cracks down on opposition media.

As with virtually all other aspects of human rights, there is no consensus regarding the “proper” role of the United States in fostering greater regional support for democracy. The U.S. government has focused largely on free market policies, centered on the idea that capitalism will provide economic opportunities for individuals, which in turn will make them believe that democracy benefits them. Critics disagree, at times strenuously, citing the increases in income inequality and poverty and the widespread sense of disenfranchisement.

In the post-Cold War era, the U.S. government has acted more often in defense of Latin American democracy. In 1993, Guatemalan President Jorge Serrano attempted a self-coup (known in Spanish as an “autogolpe”), which meant suspending the constitution and dissolving the legislature. In response, the Clinton administration froze economic aid and insisted that he restore democracy. Ultimately the Guatemalan military compelled Serrano’s resignation. In 1996, Paraguayan army commander Lino Oviedo refused a presidential order to resign, and coup rumors quickly emerged. The U.S. ambassador immediately announced support for the president, even providing him safe haven, and Oviedo was eventually imprisoned. As already mentioned, in 2009 the Obama administration verbally supported José Manuel Zelaya when he was overthrown, but accepted the delay that allowed for the election of a new president. When other presidents—such as Rafael Correa—faced crises, the Obama administration issued supportive statements.

In Peru, the United States had initially accepted the 1992 autogolpe of President Alberto Fujimori, but after a fraudulent (and unconstitutional) election in 2000, U.S. policy shifted. His widespread unpopularity, abuses

of human rights, authoritarian tendencies, and then a scandal linking the Peruvian military to the Colombian FARC led to increased U.S. pressure, which then played a role in Fujimori's decision to resign and seek asylum in Japan in 2000. U.S. support for democracy has been more problematic after 9/11.

Summary and Conclusion

Before World War II, the issue of human rights was not a factor in U.S.–Latin American relations (or, in fact, international relations in general). The savagery of that war and especially the Holocaust vaulted human rights to the fore and made them a central part of the creation of the United Nations and the Organization of American States. However, the Cold War, with its emphasis on security over all else, quickly shifted human rights to the policy backburner, where it would remain until the 1970s.

As realism would predict, protection of human rights is a casualty of security, and as a consequence it took years for the issue to become relevant. Even after the Cold War, the United States was loath to sign either global or hemispheric agreements, arguing that they would infringe too much on sovereignty. This policy stance is unlikely to change dramatically. Change has been more noticeable in Latin America, where policy calculations differ from those in the United States.

The resurgence of human rights as a policy priority for Latin America came as a result of the new military dictatorships that were taking over in the region beginning in the 1960s, particularly because they were forcing out elected governments in countries like Chile and Uruguay that had enjoyed relatively long histories of stability and democratic elections. The Chilean dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet became the epitome of what was wrong with human rights in the region, and his regime was a target for human rights activists.

In addition, at that time the development of human rights NGOs provided a forum that had not existed before. Even if the United States and many Latin American governments were reticent to speak out against Cold War allies, NGOs could, thereby putting pressure on the U.S. Congress and the international community to take action. This poses a challenge to the realist perspective, in that nonstate actors may gradually be forcing a powerful country to rethink policies and perhaps orient them in ways that are not consistent with its perceptions of security interests. This is the core of liberal institutionalism.

The end of the Cold War obviously changed the security perceptions of U.S. policy makers and created an opportunity to put the weight of the executive and legislative branches behind human rights policies. The attitude of the United States toward its relationship with Latin American

militaries changed to the extent that human rights became an explicit part of military training.

After September 11, 2001, the issues of human rights and security were once again complicated. Following the end of the Bush administration that emphasis softened a little, but overall the U.S. government still views much of its relationship with Latin America in securitized terms. Drug traffickers, guerrillas, and perceptions of extrahemispheric threats remain highly relevant.

Research Questions

1. What are the most prominent differences in U.S. policy regarding human rights during the Cold War versus the post-Cold War period?
2. What are the relative merits of realist and liberal institutional theories for analyzing human rights?
3. In what ways have international NGOs aided domestic NGOs in Latin America to protect human rights? Use the cases of one or two specific countries.
4. How effective does the United States appear to have been over time in reducing the human rights abuses committed by Latin American militaries? How much influence does it have in that regard?
5. How much influence has the U.S. Congress had over the human rights policies of the United States?

Notes

- 1 United Nations website.
- 2 Loveman 1993.
- 3 Quoted in Loveman 2001, 275.
- 4 Barnes 2004, 310.
- 5 Sikkink 1996, 63.
- 6 Sikkink 1996, 65.
- 7 Cleary 1997, 119.
- 8 Keck and Sikkink 1998, 116.
- 9 Quoted in Schoultz 1981, 15.
- 10 Organization of American States website 2003.
- 11 Kissinger 2001, 93.
- 12 Bachelet 2005.
- 13 School of the Americas Watch website.
- 14 Ramsey 1997, 225.
- 15 Ramsey and Raimondo 2001, 122.
- 16 Ramsey 1997, 245.
- 17 Sikkink 2004, 208.

- 18 Human Rights Watch 2013.
 19 Robles 2009.
 20 Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 2013.
 21 *The Economist* 2013.

Further Sources

Books

- Brewer-Carías, Allan R. *Constitutional Protection of Human Rights in Latin America: A Comparative Study of Amparo Proceedings* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014). An in-depth analysis of Latin American constitutions with a focus on how constitutionally granted rights are protected in each country. The judicial discussions are particularly valuable.
- Domínguez, Jorge I., Rafael Hernández, and Lorena G. Barberia (eds.). *Debating U.S.–Cuban Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2012). This book provides a variety of different views of the U.S.–Cuba relationship, with authors both from the United States and from Cuba.
- Keck, Margaret E., and Kathryn Sikkink. *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998). A groundbreaking book that addresses the ways in which international human rights activists had a dramatic impact on international and national policies and laws. Although it is not focused exclusively on Latin America, it dedicates a chapter to the region.
- Sikkink, Kathryn. *Mixed Signals: U.S. Human Rights Policy and Latin America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004). An excellent book by an expert on the issue, emphasizing not only the “mixed signals” that the United States has sent in past decades, but also the promise of important shifts that have taken place in U.S. policy. In particular, Sikkink argues that human rights advocates have been central in pushing the U.S. government to incorporate human rights in its policy toward Latin America.
- Wright, Thomas C. *State Terrorism in Latin America: Chile, Argentina, and International Human Rights Rights* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006). This book does not center on U.S. policy, but rather on how international human rights movements emerged during the Cold War in response to the human rights abuses taking place in Latin American dictatorship. They subsequently had an impact on how human rights law was interpreted elsewhere.

Websites

United Nations, Human Rights Section. Part of the UN website is dedicated to human rights. It includes the entire text of the Universal Declaration, in addition to a wealth of other documents, treaties, and commission reports on a variety of topics, such as protection of women’s rights, children, racial discrimination, and political persecution. <http://www.un.org/rights/index.html>

Amnesty International, Americas. This section of the Amnesty International web site focuses on the Western Hemisphere. It has links both to regions and to

specific countries. Each country link contains reports, dating back over a decade, on issues that Amnesty International has raised and its perceptions of actions being taken by the government of that country. <http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/countries/americas>

Human Rights Watch, Americas. Like Amnesty International, HRW has a specific section on the Americas on its website. It frequently updates its press releases on current events related to human rights abuses and links to each country that has reports dating back to 1989. <http://www.hrw.org/americas>

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The website of this OAS commission provides the text of all human rights agreements and documents, along with press releases, speeches, annual reports (from 1970 to the present), and special reports. It also includes many country studies dating back to the 1960s. <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/default.asp>

Latin American Network Information Center (LANIC), Human Rights. The University of Texas provides a very useful website that has links to a large number of topics and organizations. For human rights, it includes direct links to regional organizations, NGOs in Latin American countries and in the United States, research resources, and publications on human rights. <http://lanic.utexas.edu/la/region/hrights/>

Drug Trafficking and Terrorism

Timeline

- 1980** Shining Path formed
- 1986** President Ronald Reagan announced “War on Drugs”; U.S. certification policy began
- 1992** Bombing of Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires
- 1992** Shining Path leader Abimael Guzmán captured
- 1994** Bombing of Jewish community center in Buenos Aires
- 2000** “Plan Colombia” went into effect
- 2001** U.S. attacked by Al Qaeda terrorists
- 2008** Mérida Initiative went into effect
- 2012** Peace negotiations began with the FARC

A majority of Bolivians are of indigenous descent, descendants of the pre-Columbian population. For millennia many have grown coca, a stimulant that they chew for both cultural and practical (such as energy) reasons. It just so happens, however, that coca can be chemically transformed into cocaine, the popularity of which skyrocketed in the United States during the 1970s. Seemingly overnight, in the eyes of the U.S. government those individuals were transformed into drug traffickers—and therefore tied to terrorists—and their activities criminalized. This sort of transformation has led many Latin American leaders to challenge some aspects of U.S. security policy.

Concern over terrorism, drug trafficking, and political violence in the Americas is nothing new. Over decades, for the United States the existence of some type of armed threat was routinely the rationale employed for using

force, including invasion, to protect its national security. The assumptions of realism clearly held during the Cold War, and the new specter of a global threat that emerged after September 11, 2001 brought the issue of the use of power to protect and advance national interests back to the fore. A militarized response, in which police and armed forces are prominent, once again took center stage. The intensity of 9/11 has faded over time, but the emphasis on security remains prominent.

In Latin America, the perceptions of political violence are not monolithic. Some governments advocate the same policies as the United States, while others seek alternate solutions, and these even shift within countries as different governments come and go. Even in countries where the government has launched military initiatives, prominent groups sometimes oppose such measures and argue that the interests of the United States do not mesh with national concerns.

Thus, in an international system characterized by anarchy, states are likely to clash over the response to perceived threats. Realist theory would posit that states faced with such potentially serious threats will behave according to their own interests and probably form coalitions that reflect shared interests. In the context of U.S.–Latin American relations, this can foster discord, as the hegemonic power's assertions of threats are not widely shared.

The word “terrorism” itself is a loaded term, nebulous and open to interpretation. Latin American guerrillas viewed themselves as freedom fighters, while the U.S. government and Latin American militaries preferred more negative labels. In the 1980s, a new type of threat emerged, associated with drugs, that would soon take a lion's share of U.S. policy attention, especially in the Andean region. These narco-terrorists were driven by profit and not ideology. Later, the U.S. “war on terror” would intensify U.S. attention on other potential terrorist threats connected to the Middle East. In fact, senior analysts in the U.S. Defense Department wrote a memo after September 11, 2001 that proposed launching attacks in South America as “a surprise to the terrorists.”¹ The notion that Latin American governments would also be unpleasantly surprised was not examined.

That attitude gradually toned down, but the Middle East threat scenarios remain. A 2013 report by the Congressional Research Office noted that “For most countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, threats emanating from terrorism are low,” yet at the same time Congress “is already continuing its oversight of terrorism concerns in the Western Hemisphere.”² That represents a mismatch of priorities that becomes a source of tension.

The Nature of Terrorism

Merely defining the concept of terrorism is a slippery undertaking, with hundreds of definitions sprouting up from all directions, often based on ideological bias. A unique aspect of terrorism, however, is that it is deliberately perpetrated

on “innocents”; that is, people who are not directly participating in a given political conflict. In a prominent text on terrorism, Cindy Combs offers the following definition:

A synthesis of war and theater, a dramatization of the most proscribed kind of violence—that which is perpetrated on innocent victims—played before an audience in the hope of creating a mood of fear, for political purposes.³

The U.S. government’s legal definition is even broader. Title 18 (Chapter 113B, section 2331) of the U.S. Code defines “terrorism” as something that “appears” to be intended “to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping.”⁴ Because the definition hinges on the word “innocent” or “civilian,” terrorism is in the eye of the beholder. And governments have often affixed the terrorist label to political opponents, thereby legitimizing their persecution.

There is also a difference between terrorism perpetrated by individuals or groups and state-sponsored terrorism, which refers to terrorist acts organized and directed by governments. Currently, most terrorist acts in Latin America are committed by individuals or groups; during the Cold War, state-sponsored terrorism was much more prevalent, as dictatorships forged state policies of killing political enemies.

What varies even more is the appropriate response to the organization or group deemed to be terrorist. The most common answer has been military—fighting fire with fire—but this solution has been controversial, both within the United States and in individual Latin American countries.

The Debate over Where Terrorism Exists

So where has terrorism arisen in Latin America? Four organizations are listed by the State Department as “designated foreign terrorist organizations” (of which there are thirty-seven worldwide): the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC), the Army of National Liberation (ELN), the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), and Peru’s Shining Path. Two organizations were originally on the list but then were removed when they no longer engaged in any terrorist acts: Peru’s Tupac Amaru Revolution Movement (1997–2001) and Chile’s Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front Dissidents (1997–1999). In addition, the United States has identified terrorist activities in drug production and trafficking, guerrillas (mostly in Colombia), paramilitary violence, and support for extrahemispheric groups linked to political violence in other areas of the world (i.e., the Middle East).

Because there is no consensus on whether a threat of terrorism even exists, it is not startling that U.S. solutions to its perceived threats are coming under scrutiny in Latin America. For example, the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq was widely denounced. Chile and Mexico were nonpermanent members of the UN Security Council when the United States attempted to garner support for invasion. Both countries publicly opposed a UN stamp of approval on the invasion, which scuttled U.S. hopes of obtaining a resolution for the use of force. Other governments signaled their disagreement, with Brazilian President Lula saying, "No one gave the United States the right to judge what is good and what is bad for the world."²⁵ That accelerated as more leftist governments took power and offered criticism of U.S. security policy. Latin American leaders tend to identify far fewer phenomena as terrorist than does the United States.

Terrorism and Drugs

In the 1970s, the appetite for drugs, especially cocaine, in the United States rose dramatically. The Nixon administration was the first to address the problem officially by launching a domestic "war on drugs" in 1971, and President Nixon even appointed Elvis Presley (of all people) as an honorary drug agent after a White House meeting. President Reagan made the topic even higher profile in 1986, when his own drug war emphasized utilizing the U.S. military for purposes of interdiction. He did not, however, choose a drug addict as his celebrity ally. Significantly, this new war officially elevated drugs to the level of a national security threat, thereby greatly widening the potential responses.

Also in 1986, the United States began the policy of "certifying" countries before they could be eligible each year to receive antidrug funding. From a realist perspective, this is using the proverbial stick to pursue security interests. It represented Congress's attempt to force the president to prove that countries were "cooperating fully," with decertification signifying that aid would not be granted. Other penalties, such as negative U.S. votes on loans from the International Monetary Fund and the Inter-American Development Bank, were also possible but not mandated by law. Although some Latin American countries (especially Bolivia and Colombia) have been decertified at one point or another, the vast majority of countries are certified even if their record of fighting drugs is not stellar. The reason is that cutting off aid drastically limits U.S. influence, so that in the case of Peru, for example, the U.S. government acknowledged the growth of the coca industry, but argued that certification was necessary to ensure U.S. involvement in the economy and the protection of human rights. Similar arguments have been made for other countries. The president has the option of providing continued assistance to noncooperating countries if it is deemed in the national

interest, and presidents have used this waiver extensively. Regardless, the certification process is viewed as insulting in Latin America. The United States acknowledged this fact in 2002 by avoiding the term “de-certification” and instead labeling it “failing demonstrably” (versus “cooperating fully”) in the fight against the narcotics trade. Bolivia and Venezuela—also ideological adversaries—are now common examples of governments deemed to be failing demonstrably.

As the demand for drugs in the United States soared, the profit to be made from cultivation, processing, and trafficking soon became immense. The country initially affected the most was Colombia, and for years it would continue to bear the brunt of the drug wars. The tremendous profit margins sparked violence, and rival groups in Colombia fought to seize as big a slice of the pie as possible. Throughout Latin American history, groups that employed violence most often offered an ideological rationale, even if only for public consumption. Drug-related terrorism lacks ideology and is instead focused on power and profit. It takes the form of intimidating elected officials and judges through bombings, assassinations, kidnappings, and extortion. It creates a climate of fear within which it is difficult to build effective political institutions.

Since 1999, the United Nations has published the annual World Drug Report, and the 2013 edition demonstrates the scope of the problem. If anything, the market for illicit drugs is expanding across the world.⁶ Especially troubling is the rise of drug use in Latin America, especially South America. Cocaine use has increased in Brazil, which is the largest country in the region. Average cannabis use is higher in South America than the global average. The growth of a middle class brings with it problems associated with disposable income. Put simply, people with money to spare have the means to buy drugs. Estimating the total profits associated with illicit drugs in Latin America is a tricky business, because drug traffickers do not tend to inform the authorities of how much money they are illegally making. The United Nations estimates that annual drug revenues in Latin America are \$150 billion, about half the global total.

Producing Countries, Terrorism and Drugs: The Case of Colombia

The Colombian case illustrates many of these complexities. Colombia is blessed by tremendous natural resources (including oil), but part of the blessing became a curse, in that large expanses in remote areas have the perfect climate and soil for coca. Although Colombian presidents sought positive relations with the United States for many years (including sending troops to Korea in 1951), they crafted foreign policies that were consciously

independent of the United States, including opposition to U.S. intervention in Central America (with leadership in the Contadora Group), participation in the Non-Aligned Movement, and seeking Latin American solutions to the debt crisis. The upsurge in drug-related violence, however, served to emphasize the power imbalance, as Colombia would shift its foreign policies in response to pressure from the U.S. government, which held the purse strings to enormous amounts of aid. In the past, Colombian presidents had been reluctant to use military force. The U.S.–Colombian relationship broke down in the early 1990s, as the United States accused President Ernesto Samper of being ineffective and tied to the drug cartels, even labeling Colombia a “narco-state.”⁷

Particularly since the 1980s, virtually all Colombian violence is fueled by drug money. In addition to the drug traffickers themselves, the already existing Marxist guerrilla groups—the FARC and ELN—began taking “taxes” estimated at 10–15 percent for each transaction between coca growers and drug traffickers, which nets approximately \$500 million a year.

Added to this volatile mix were paramilitary groups, the private armies originally funded by landowners who wanted armed protection from the guerrillas. The largest of these, the AUC, committed more acts of terrorism than any other group in Colombia (on occasion in conjunction with the military) and also tapped into the drug trade. As one experienced observer notes, “All of Colombia’s armies seemed to assume, barring clear proof to the contrary, that everyone in their path was suspect, a potential ‘military target.’”⁸ The government successfully negotiated the disbanding of the AUC in 2006, a slow and imperfect process that has nonetheless contributed greatly to a reduction in violence.

The Colombian government considered itself under siege, and in late 1998 President Andrés Pastrana proposed a program to combine Colombian and international funds to fight the war on drugs, largely military but including a comprehensive program of economic development. What became known as “Plan Colombia” involved requesting aid from both Europe and the United States, a total of \$7.5 billion, \$4 billion of which would come from the Colombian government. European leaders, who Pastrana hoped would contribute humanitarian assistance, did not, but in January 2000 the Clinton administration agreed to pay \$1.6 billion. Given concerns within Congress that Colombia could become “another Vietnam,” the administration framed it almost entirely in antidrug terms. Consistently, more than 80 percent of the funds went to the military and police. Particularly under President Obama, Plan Colombia was gradually phased out and replaced by a Country Assistance Agreement that emphasized nonmilitary funding more. By 2014, the combined military and economic aid was roughly \$300 million, no small sum but much lower than before.

The U.S.–Colombian relationship vastly improved after the implementation of Plan Colombia. President Alvaro Uribe was elected in 2002 on a platform of restoring security to the country. He announced, for example, that the military would be employed to retake the Switzerland-sized territory in southern Colombia that had been ceded to the FARC in 1999 by President Pastrana as part of a failed peace agreement. His use of emergency powers (which include suspension of normal constitutional rights) was popular, and within months his approval rating was 74 percent. It never dipped.

Uribe was very canny in placing Colombia's violence in the broader context of the U.S. war on terrorism. Even as he supported the Bush administration's preparations to invade Iraq, Uribe argued that drugs posed "a more serious menace than Iraq," so "why don't they consider an equal, similar deployment to put an end to this problem."⁹ Although the United States did not commit to such a deployment, in 2004 it did double the number of U.S. military personnel (from 400 to 800), primarily to protect oil pipelines—an increasingly common target—from sabotage. Uribe introduced "Plan Patriota" in 2004 in cooperation with the United States, which had the FARC as its primary target (as opposed to drug trafficking, which has been the top priority for U.S. policy makers and Plan Colombia). Now the Colombian military strategy has become a model for other governments facing armed insurgencies, including Afghanistan.

Some of these strategies antagonized other countries. In 2008, the Uribe administration bombed just over its border with Ecuador and killed Raúl Reyes, the second most powerful FARC leader. The operation involved extensive U.S. involvement both operationally and with intelligence. The governments of Venezuela and Ecuador protested loudly, and for a while there was a mutual recalling of ambassadors. The immediate crisis was smoothed over after several months, but did not completely disappear until Uribe left office.

Uribe's Defense Minister, Juan Manuel Santos, was a primary architect of the militarized approach in Colombia and therefore received his boss's seal of approval as a presidential candidate in 2010. He won easily, but soon switched policy directions. In particular, he embarked on negotiations with the FARC to disarm and demobilize the group, as had been accomplished with the FMLN in El Salvador. That earned him the ire of Uribe, who began attacking him viciously on Twitter and actively (but unsuccessfully) engineered a candidate to oppose Santos in the 2014 presidential election.

With at least rhetorical support from the United States, the peace negotiations with the FARC began in earnest in 2012 and continued slowly but seemingly surely through 2014. Some of the key points of agreement were the need for land reform, infrastructure improvements, complete end to the armed conflict, a coordinated policy to end drug trafficking, and reparation for victims. One bone of contention was what type of punishment (if any) members of the FARC might face.

Box 12.1 Republic of Colombia, Resolution 339, September 19, 2012

“By Which is Authorized the Installation and Development of a Dialogue Roundtable, Government Delegates Are Designated, and other Dispositions are Enacted”

The delegates of the Government of the Republic of Colombia (National Government) and of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—Army of the People (FARC-EP);

As a result of the Exploratory Encounter that had Havana, Cuba as its location between February 23 and August 26 of 2012, which had the participation of the Government of Cuba and the Government of Norway as guarantors, and with the help of the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as facilitator of logistics and companionship;

Acknowledging the clamor of the population for peace, and recognizing that:

The construction of peace is an issue for society as a whole that requires the participation of all, without distinction, including other guerrilla organizations that we invite to join us in this proposal;

Respect for human rights in all parts of the national territory is a goal that the State should promote;

Economic development with social justice and in harmony with the environment is a guarantee of peace and prosperity;

Social development with equity and well-being, including for the vast majority, allows the country to grow;

A peaceful Colombia will play an active and sovereign role in the peace and development of the region and the world;

It is important to expand democracy as a condition to achieve a solid foundation for peace.

Source: <http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/Normativa/Resoluciones/Documents/RESOLUCION%20339%20DEL%2019%20DE%20SEPTIEMBRE%20DE%202012.pdf>, translated by the author

Drugs and Political Violence in Bolivia and Peru

Bolivia and Peru are also important source countries. From the so-called balloon effect, whereby squeezing in one country leads to greater production in another, production shifted to Colombia when counterdrug policies were

expanded in Bolivia and Peru. Coca cultivation never came close to disappearing, however, and the two countries have tended to evince more opposition to U.S. drug policies than Colombia and are less eager to use military force in rural areas. But after the policies of the Uribe government, the balloon effect has shifted back again, so that coca production is rising in Bolivia and Peru.

Bolivia was a testing ground for new U.S. antidrug strategies. One was Operation Blast Furnace in 1986, which included the participation of U.S. troops to disrupt the cocaine trade. It was ultimately counterproductive, however, because it generated considerable backlash. In 1998, led by president and former military dictator Hugo Banzer, the Bolivian government launched Plan Dignidad, an aggressive military effort that led to major decreases in coca cultivation and much improved relations with the United States. Popular support for such measures has been mixed. In rural areas, it is quite low, but dissatisfaction has also been on the rise in urban areas, where the issue is viewed as involving sovereignty and nationalism.

Tensions between the United States and Bolivia continually surface because of the stiff resistance of coca growers, or *cocaleros*, to what they view as policies being imposed by the United States, leaving the Bolivian government in the unenviable position of standing between U.S. pressure and domestic opposition. Even Bolivian military officers involved in eradication can feel guilty: "We know that what we are doing here causes these people to go hungry. Alternative development projects don't provide income. This makes us the bad guys."¹⁰

Evo Morales (himself a former coca grower) resisted the militarized nature of his predecessors' policies and backed off them, which eventually garnered him the "failing demonstrably" label. In turn, he expelled all Drug Enforcement Agency officials. Despite the negative label, in both 2013 and 2014 the United Nations made note of Bolivia's success in reducing coca cultivation, in large part with the assistance of Brazil.¹¹ This involves manual eradication rather than aerial spraying. The two countries signed an agreement in 2012 that combats cocaine while acknowledging legitimate coca leaf production. The United States government was not particularly pleased with these developments, noting in the 2014 report on Bolivia that "Bolivia's ability to identify, investigate, and dismantle drug trafficking organizations remains diminished following the 2008 expulsion of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, which provided assistance to Bolivian counterparts."¹² After years of control (and what the Bolivian government would consider manipulation), it has not been easy to cede it.

In Peru, the debt crisis in the 1980s spurred migration toward the coca-growing regions, and the trade quickly expanded. During the tenure of Alberto Fujimori (1990–2000), there were numerous reports of drug-related corruption in the government, especially his shadowy advisor, Vladimiro Montesinos. As in Bolivia, the Peruvian government has always faced rural opposition to eradication, though Peruvian *cocaleros* have been far less organized. They have, however, protested periodically in ways that have been

very disruptive (such as seizing control of a power plant in 2010). U.S.–Peruvian relations continually have to take that into consideration.

This was a priority for the United States, because coca cultivation grew in Peru during the 2000s. When Ollanta Humala became president in 2011, he carried with him the “leftist” label but soon settled into a positive relationship with the United States, including the fight against coca cultivation. The Shining Path guerrillas, whose defeat in the 1990s I will address shortly, reemerged after 2010 as essentially a drug trafficking organization. In response, President Humala increased Peru’s antinarcotics budget, intensified eradication (including aerial spraying), reforming the police, and increasing naval interdiction.

Transshipment Countries: The War on Drugs in Mexico and Central America

Drug trafficking and violence affect other Latin American countries primarily in the context of transshipment, as drugs pass through from source countries on their way to waiting customers in the United States. Although Mexico has long been one source of marijuana and poppy, its long border with the United States transformed it into the primary launching pad for bringing cocaine into the United States. Meanwhile, parts of Central America have become like war zones.

As Mexico democratized after a democratic election in 2000, drug trafficking also grew. In 2006, President Felipe Calderón launched a large and multipronged attack on drug trafficking organizations, which would leave tens of thousands of people dead. Homicides surged, some of them incredibly brutal (such as beheadings). Organizations such as the Knights Templar, Los Zetas, the Sinaloa Cartel, the Juárez Cartel, and others vied for control of different parts of Mexico.

In 1995, high-level meetings between U.S. and Mexican officials set in motion greater military contacts, and by 1996 almost 1,000 Mexican soldiers began receiving training in the United States. That relationship grew with time, as did the Mexican army’s participation in the drug war. This culminated in the Mérida Initiative (sometimes dubbed “Plan Mexico”) in 2008, a security agreement with the United States aimed at drug trafficking and organized crime more generally. From 2008 to 2014, the U.S. Congress appropriated \$2.4 billion for the Mérida Initiative, which included purchase of U.S. military equipment and training, programs intended to strengthen political institutions, and working with the Mexican Interior Ministry to address violent crime in Mexico. When he took office in 2013, President Enrique Peña Nieto emphasized his continued commitment to the program, which now has four pillars: 1) dismantling organized crime groups; 2) strengthening judicial-sector institutions; 3) building a twenty-first-century border; and 4) fostering resilient communities. Its success has been mixed. Homicides did decrease in 2012 and 2013, but even success at targeting major drug trafficking organizations led to splintering and the emergence of more and smaller organizations. The drugs themselves



Figure 12.1 Mexican Cartels Source: Beittel 2013. <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41576.pdf>

continued to move northward and increasingly guns manufactured in the United States move southward into the hands of criminals.

Further, the Mexican government's efforts in this regard have been problematic for human rights. As Human Rights Watch noted in 2014:

Mexico's security forces have participated in widespread enforced disappearances since former President Calderón (2006–2012) launched a “war on drugs.” Members of all security force branches continue to carry out disappearances during the Peña Nieto administration, in some cases collaborating directly with criminal groups. In June 2013, Mexico's National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) said it was investigating 2,443 disappearances in which it had found evidence of the involvement of state agents.¹³

The connection between drug trafficking and corruption is a source of friction, as the U.S. government has accused high-ranking Mexican officials (including cabinet members, state governors, and presidential advisors) as having ties to drug traffickers. A Swiss study determined that Raúl Salinas, the brother of former president Carlos Salinas (1988–1994), controlled the flow of drugs in and out of the country during his brother's term.¹⁴ Moreover, President Calderón utilized the military in large part because the police were so corrupt. Drug-related corruption is rife within all three major political parties in Mexico, which is an obvious obstacle to meaningful progress.

Central America has also suffered considerably because of transshipment. It is no stranger to drug trafficking, but in the past decade or so the violence has spiraled out of control. Gangs like Mara Salvatrucha and the 18th Street Gang expanded their reach. Even the term “gang” can be misleading because it suggests a localized phenomenon, whereas in Central America gangs are large, well-organized, politically connected, and international criminal operations. In El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras there are roughly 85,000 gang members.¹⁵

Their activities revolve around cocaine trafficking, kidnapping, extortion, and human smuggling. As a result, the homicide rates in Central America shot up. The United States responded with a variety of programs intended to strengthen judicial systems, improve intelligence gathering, training police, and fostering economic development. These policies face the additional challenge that Central American gangs have begun working with Mexican counterparts, which expanded the problem in particular to southern Mexico.

U.S. immigration policy plays an important role in the circulation of gang members. Since they are transnational, with extensive ties all across the United States, they travel frequently and when caught are deported back to their country of origin. The complexities of deportation often mean that Central American governments are not aware that their returning citizens are hardened criminals, so they arrive and are free. Especially in El Salvador and Guatemala, presidents have launched policies in this regard as varied as use of the army to truces. With the demand for cocaine and other drugs still high (no pun intended) in the United States and even Europe, these efforts can have positive effects on the margins but have not produced impressive results.

“Winning” the War on Narcoterrorism

Unlike a conventional war in which one side is clearly defeated, the war on drugs, like the war on terrorism more generally, is multifaceted and rarely yields obvious victory. From a strictly military point of view, “winning” would mean ending the drug trade, or at least the most violent elements of it. Given access to immense funds, this is a tall order. Organized crime related to drugs remains a critical dilemma across the region, especially in the Andean countries, Central America, and Mexico (in the parlance of U.S. policy, guerrillas and drug traffickers tend to be viewed jointly as “terrorists,” even though the latter is oriented more toward profit than toward politics).

One important advance is that guerrilla war in the region has decreased from the almost catastrophic levels seen in the 1990s. The FARC is negotiating, the ELN may join those talks, and the Shining Path still exists, but is far less destructive than its heyday in the 1980s. The left in Latin America now takes power through elections and it has almost totally abandoned the armed route, which has not been successful since the Sandinistas overthrew Somoza in 1979.

From a Latin American point of view, “winning” would involve eliminating the incentives—especially monetary—that prompt citizens to grow coca and distribute it. Programs aimed at crop substitution—meaning subsidies to grow legal crops such as corn, coffee, rice, cotton, heart of palm, black pepper, pineapple, bananas, passion fruit, and macadamia nuts—by and large have not been successful. Convincing the rural population to grow these new crops has been difficult, as an immediate problem is that they do not yield the same profit and, in many cases, are harder to grow than coca (which is a hardy plant that grows quickly). In addition, the U.S. domestic policy of agricultural subsidies that protects U.S. farmers makes it harder for Latin American farmers to sell alternative products in the U.S. market. The Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act, first passed in 1991 and extended many times (though only for six months), granted Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru preferences for certain exports. Approximately 5,600 products were listed (such as apparel, jewelry, footwear, leather, watches, cacao, and lumber), though politically sensitive items (such as cotton) were not because the foreign policy is largely intermestic. The agreement essentially came to an end because Bolivia was suspended in 2009, a new trade promotion agreement between the United States and Peru went into effect the same year, the Colombia free trade agreement started in 2012, and Ecuador pulled out unilaterally in 2013.

In part, success can also be measured in the reduction of land acreage used for coca cultivation. The evidence here is mixed. The drastic drop in coca cultivation in Colombia is a welcome sign. The downside is another balloon effect, because both Bolivia and Peru are once again increasing, though not to the same level as Colombia was previously. Bolivia and Peru are not at the same very high levels as they were in the early 1990s, but the reversion is troubling.

Table 12.1 Hectares of Coca Cultivation in Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru, 2002–2012

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Bolivia	24,400	28,450	24,600	36,000	37,000	38,500	36,500	35,500	34,000	39,500	32,500
Colombia	144,450	113,850	114,100	145,000	147,000	134,000	82,500	77,500	69,500	52,500	48,000
Peru	36,000	31,500	27,500	53,500	54,500	43,500	44,000	46,000	66,500	62,500	58,500
	204,850	173,450	166,200	234,500	238,500	216,600	163,000	159,000	170,000	154,500	139,000

Sources: INCSR Reports, 2003–2012.

We need to be careful with these numbers, because they are not as precise as they look. The U.S. government as well as the United Nations come up with ways of estimating the total number of hectares (one hectare is just under 2.5 acres), but it is impossible to go around counting them exactly. Nonetheless, they provide us with a solid sense of patterns.

Unfortunately, even success can have serious consequences. For example, the most common strategy to eradicate coca plants is aerial spraying of herbicides. Private contractors (usually U.S. citizens) fly small planes to spray from the air. Although the U.S. government considers aerial spraying a highly effective way to eradicate coca, from the ground the perspective is strikingly different. Because legitimate farmers can live close to coca plantations and aerial spraying is imprecise (pilots fly as high as possible to avoid being shot at), their legal crops are often destroyed as well. There is also fear that people are being sprayed (which causes blisters and poisoning) and that water sources may become contaminated.

Victory would also entail a reduction in the amount of narco-terrorist violence. Colombia had enjoyed the dubious honor of having the most kidnappings in the world, which has since switched to Mexico. Again, this is a version of the balloon effect. Homicides also rose in Mexico as well as in Central America. Honduras has the highest homicide rate in the world, with Venezuela second, El Salvador fourth, and Guatemala fifth.

In a real way, succeeding also entails convincing people in the region that the war needs to be fought in this manner, or in some cases fought at all. Many Latin Americans ask the question of why it is being fought in the first place. Peasants struggling to subsist are certainly not much concerned whether more middle-class teenagers in the United States become addicted to crack, and they wonder why they are caught in the middle of a battle they view as utterly removed from them. In 2013, Bolivian President Evo Morales argued that “the war on drugs pushed by the United States is a failure. By contrast we’ve shown that we’re better off in this fight without the United States.”¹⁶ His version of the drug war focused on traffickers rather than peasants. Suspicion about U.S. objectives remains high. Dependency theorists would follow a similar line of thought, as the drug trade could be viewed as yet another example of how Latin American economies are driven by the demands of the developed world. In addition, the fact that peasants engage in the drug trade is indicative of a failure of the Colombian economy to produce jobs. Persistent underdevelopment thus further fuels the drug trade.

A relatively new development in Latin America is high-profile discussion about the decriminalization of drugs. The premise of the so-called drug war is that these narcotics are illegal and therefore require a security-oriented response. The decriminalization position gained a great deal of attention in 2009, when former presidents Ernesto Zedillo (Mexico), César Gaviria (Colombia), and Fernando Henrique Cardoso (Brazil) wrote an op-ed in the

Wall Street Journal. They called for an entirely new way of thinking about the problems associated with drugs:

The first step in the search for alternative solutions is to acknowledge the disastrous consequences of current policies. Next, we must shatter the taboos that inhibit public debate about drugs in our societies. Antinarcotic policies are firmly rooted in prejudices and fears that sometimes bear little relation to reality. The association of drugs with crime segregates addicts in closed circles where they become even more exposed to organized crime.¹⁷

In 2012, even Guatemalan President Otto Pérez Molina, who was elected on a hardline security platform, admitted that he would not mind discussing decriminalization as a way to reduce violence. Since 2006, six Latin American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, and Uruguay) have passed decriminalization laws of various kinds. New laws on marijuana have even been passed in the United States (in Colorado and Washington).

The changes inherent in such an approach are so great that it is unlikely to budge U.S. drug policy any time soon. At the Summit of the Americas meeting in 2012, President Obama said flatly, “I personally, and my administration’s position, is that legalization is not the answer.”¹⁸ But the regional responses to the idea of decriminalization introduced an entirely new angle that had never been taken seriously before.

Moreover, the drug war can be measured in terms of demand in the United States (though also Europe, which is an important market for South American cocaine). As the Nobel Prize–winning Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa once argued, “Production exists because a market exists, a near irresistible goad to produce. Farmers can increase their earnings fivefold, tenfold, sometimes one hundredfold by planting coca instead of traditional crops.”¹⁹ Given the booming market, it is extraordinarily difficult to stop production. According to the U.S. government, illicit drug use is on the rise.²⁰ Profits go well into the billions, ensuring a strong incentive to keep up production.

Ideological Violence

Although the drug trade is the engine of much violence in Latin America, there are still pockets of ideologically motivated organizations that seek the overthrow of governments. Aside from the FARC, one of the most deadly is in Peru. The Sendero Luminoso (“Shining Path”) was the brainchild of a philosophy professor, Abimael Guzmán. Organized in the 1970s, it was based on Marxist ideology, and through the 1980s it led a violent and relentless campaign; according to Peru’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission, it was directly responsible for 54 percent of the 69,000 deaths caused by guerrilla war.²¹ Shining Path’s goal was even more extreme than most Marxist organizations in Latin America, because it wanted to destroy all existing institutions and create a

peasant society loosely based on the ideas of Mao Zedong, the former Chinese Communist dictator. The commission estimated that at its height, Shining Path had approximately 5,000 members, which “speaks of an exceptional ferocity,” given the number of deaths that it caused.

Unlike drug policy, the U.S. and Peruvian governments were of one mind when it came to deciding what methods were necessary to face the problem. Under the leadership of President Fujimori, Peru made significant advances against Shining Path and even caught Guzmán in 1992. (He was then dressed in a striped prison outfit and placed in a public cage, where he ranted against the government and announced that the revolution would cost a million deaths.) The group never formally disbanded, but exists now as a shadow of its former self, involved primarily in the trafficking of drugs.

With the encouragement of the U.S. government (despite a brief snag in relations when Fujimori dissolved Congress in a “self-coup” in 1992), Fujimori had utilized all measures at his disposal to fight terrorism. The downside, however, was the erosion of Peruvian democracy, which was already teetering on the brink. Antiterrorist legislation laid waste to due process. Furthermore, Fujimori had empowered the national intelligence agency and, with the assistance of his advisor Vladimiro Montesinos, utilized it in the name of security to spy on the entire country, especially his political enemies. The mounting corruption charges would eventually prompt Fujimori and Montesinos to flee the country in 2000. The former would successfully seek asylum in Japan (in 2005, he flew to Chile, where he was immediately arrested and later extradited to Peru, where he was convicted and imprisoned), whereas the latter would be arrested and eventually imprisoned.

Religious Extremism

Many members of the U.S. Congress charge that support for religious extremists, especially those originating in the Middle East, is a growing problem in Latin America. That assessment was shared by the administration of George W. Bush, but much less so by the Obama administration. Two major attacks did occur in Argentina: the 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy and the 1994 bombing of a Jewish cultural center, which combined accounted for more than a hundred deaths. These attacks were linked to the Iranian government (including the ambassador) and received considerable international attention, but fortunately similar terrorist activities did not reappear either in Argentina or in other countries. However, the issue of Middle Eastern-based activity became far more prominent for the United States after September 11, 2001.

In particular, the so-called Triborder Area that intersects Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay has long been a haven for illicit activity, most notably money laundering, and the United States considers it a center of support for Middle Eastern terrorism. According to the United States, this support includes smuggling and drug trafficking for the purpose of raising funds for Hezbollah, Hamas,

Islamic Jihad, and even Al Qaeda. Although Latin American governments in the subregion deny links to terrorism, the United States has pushed for increased military presence in what it terms “ungoverned areas.” In 2012, President Obama signed the Countering Iran in the Western Hemisphere Act, which among other things required a “multiagency action plan” to address Iran’s presence in Latin America and in general to have more vigilance.

The State Department 2013 overview of terrorism in the western hemisphere downplayed the threat of terrorism and differentiated between international terrorism and international criminal organizations, drawing the line between ideological and profit-driven organizations.

Box 12.2 U.S. State Department, *Terrorism Report on the Western Hemisphere* (2013)

In 2013, governments in Latin America made modest improvements to their counterterrorism capabilities and their border security. Corruption, weak government institutions, insufficient interagency cooperation, weak or non-existent legislation, and a lack of resources remained the primary causes for the lack of significant progress in some of the countries. Transnational criminal organizations continued to pose a more significant threat to the region than transnational terrorism, and most countries made efforts to investigate possible connections with terrorist organizations.

Iran’s influence in the Western Hemisphere remained a concern. However, due to strong sanctions imposed on the country by both the United States and the EU, Iran has been unable to expand its economic and political ties in Latin America.

The United States continued to work with partner nations to build capacity to detect and address any potential terrorist threat.

There were no known operational cells of either al-Qa’ida or Hizballah in the hemisphere, although ideological sympathizers in South America and the Caribbean continued to provide financial and ideological support to those and other terrorist groups in the Middle East and South Asia. The Tri-Border area of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay continued to be an important regional nexus of arms, narcotics, and human trafficking; counterfeiting; pirated goods; and money laundering—all potential funding sources for terrorist organizations.

Despite the peace negotiations throughout the year, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia committed the majority of terrorist attacks in the Western Hemisphere in 2013.

Source: U.S. State Department, *Country Reports on Terrorism*, Chapter 2. Country Reports: Western Hemisphere Overview, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2013/224825.htm>

Even before September 11, 2001, the U.S. government had begun working to redefine its defense policies to account for the end of the Cold War. This effort was partly multilateral, as beginning in 1995 the defense ministers of the region met to discuss the defense issues facing the hemisphere (by 2014, nine subsequent meetings had been held). This led to a 1995 National Security Strategy for the Americas that was last updated in 2010. Under the Bush administration it showed greater attention to terrorism; that was more muted in the 2010 version, which emphasized the importance of Brazil's position as a rising power and the need to explore avenues of energy cooperation.

The Role of the OAS

After the rancor of the Cold War, the 1990s saw a period of greater consensus in the Organization of American States on the subject of terrorism. Resolutions passed in 1996 and 1998 paved the way for the creation in 1999 of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE), which began meeting in 2001 to discuss how member states could cooperate through the auspices of the OAS to combat the problem.

In the wake of September 11, 2001, the OAS moved quickly to show solidarity with the United States and to debate antiterrorist measures. Ten days later, a meeting of the foreign ministers passed a resolution condemning the attacks and calling on all countries to "take effective measures" against terrorists, though also emphasizing the need to protect human rights, civil liberties, and democracy.

Interestingly, the OAS has faced the same dilemma as the United Nations in failing to define "terrorism." Because of the difficulties inherent in differentiating a "freedom fighter" from a "terrorist," the strategy of individual governments has often been to criminalize certain activities and label the perpetrators (and their supporters) as terrorists. In that vein, the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism, passed in 2002, looks to international agreements (especially through the United Nations) to specify terrorist activities, such as seizure of aircraft, taking of hostages, and bombings. The convention thus calls for member states to share intelligence, freeze assets, deny asylum, transfer suspects, tighten borders, and prosecute money laundering. By 2014, 24 countries had ratified it. The United States ratified in late 2005.

Even countries with governments suspicious of the United States concurred with the need to fight terrorism. In fact, Hugo Chávez's government ratified the convention even before the United States. The matter of definition, however, is critical. The Venezuelan government has referred to the United States as a state sponsor of terrorism while maintaining strong relations with Iran and Syria (not to mention Cuba), which were governments on the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism. As a result, conservatives in the United States called for the Chávez government to be labeled as such. So in the region there is consensus that terrorism is a threat, but this is in the eye of the beholder.

Box 12.3 Inter-American Convention against Terrorism (2002)

ARTICLE 1. OBJECT AND PURPOSE

The purposes of this Convention are to prevent, punish, and eliminate terrorism. To that end, the states parties agree to adopt the necessary measures and to strengthen cooperation among them, in accordance with the terms of this Convention. ...

ARTICLE 3. DOMESTIC MEASURES

Each state party, in accordance with the provisions of its constitution, shall endeavor to become a party to the international instruments listed in Article 2 to which it is not yet a party and to adopt the necessary measures to effectively implement such instruments, including establishing, in its domestic legislation, penalties for the offenses described therein. ...

ARTICLE 5. SEIZURE AND CONFISCATION OF FUNDS OR OTHER ASSETS

Each state party shall, in accordance with the procedures established in its domestic law, take such measures as may be necessary to provide for the identification, freezing or seizure for the purposes of possible forfeiture, and confiscation or forfeiture, of any funds or other assets constituting the proceeds of, used to facilitate, or used or intended to finance, the commission of any of the offenses established in the international instruments listed in Article 2 of this Convention. ...

ARTICLE 7. COOPERATION ON BORDER CONTROLS

The states parties, consistent with their respective domestic legal and administrative regimes, shall promote cooperation and the exchange of information in order to improve border and customs control measures to detect and prevent the international movement of terrorists and trafficking in arms or other materials intended to support terrorist activities. ...

ARTICLE 8. COOPERATION AMONG LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES

The states parties shall work closely with one another, consistent with their respective domestic legal and administrative systems, to enhance the effectiveness of law enforcement action to combat the offenses established in the international instruments listed in Article 2. In this context, they shall establish and enhance, where necessary, channels of communication between their competent authorities in order to facilitate the secure and rapid exchange of information concerning all aspects of the offenses established in the international instruments listed in Article 2 of this Convention.

ARTICLE 15. HUMAN RIGHTS

1. The measures carried out by the states parties under this Convention shall take place with full respect for the rule of law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms.
2. Nothing in this Convention shall be interpreted as affecting other rights and obligations of states and individuals under international law, in particular the Charter of the United Nations, the Charter of the Organization of American States, international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and international refugee law.
3. Any person who is taken into custody or regarding whom any other measures are taken or proceedings are carried out pursuant to this Convention shall be guaranteed fair treatment, including the enjoyment of all rights and guarantees in conformity with the law of the state in the territory of which that person is present and applicable provisions of international law. ...

Source: Organization of American States website, http://www.oas.org/xxxiiga/english/docs_en/docs_items/AGres1840_02.htm

The exception to OAS activities, of course, remains Cuba. The United States maintains that Cuba should be labeled a “state sponsor” of terrorism, with the argument that Fidel Castro allowed members of the Spanish terrorist group ETA as well as the Colombian FARC to come to Cuba. Outside the United States, there is little acceptance of the notion that Cuba represents any sort of terrorist threat while diplomatic and trade relations between Cuba and other Latin American countries are expanding.

Immediately after September 11, 2001, Fidel Castro gave a speech condemning terrorism and sent a letter to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan expressing Cuba’s support for antiterrorist resolutions. Anti-Castro activists believed none of it and argued that someone who had espoused terrorism was in no position to condemn it. The U.S. government took the same position, which has not changed. Castro scoffs at the idea that he can be lumped into the same category as Al Qaeda or other Middle Eastern terrorist organizations, and in speeches he routinely referred to the Bush administration as “neofascist” and dictatorial. After the preemptive attack by the United States against Iraq in March 2003, Castro also began speaking regularly of the possibility that Cuba could be next: “In Miami and Washington they are now discussing where, how and when Cuba will be attacked or the problem of the Revolution will be solved.”²² His brother and successor Raúl Castro was much more muted, but also argued that Cuba’s inclusion in the terrorism list “is an insult to our people” while the embargo was “genocidal.”²³

That longstanding inclusion on the list started to shift only when in late 2014 President Obama called for it to be reviewed as part of his broader liberalization of relations between the two countries.

Fighting Terrorism while Promoting Democracy

A critical question facing any effort to combat terrorism is whether it damages the slow process of democratization in Latin America. In official documents and speeches, the U.S. government has reiterated its commitment to democracy and human rights, but the effects of antiterrorist policies have raised concerns. In particular, critics have questioned whether a renewed emphasis on intelligence gathering, the use of the military to fight domestic enemies, and martial law may erode the gains made since the end of the Cold War: “The danger is that once again the very highest levels of government are sending signals that the goal of fighting terrorism justifies the violation of human rights.”²⁴ The controversies surrounding global spying by the National Security Agency kept that in sharp relief, because technological advances allowed intelligence gathering to expand exponentially. The U.S. government justifies that spying by the need to combat terrorism.

The U.S. policy response to the threat (or perceived threat) of terrorism in Latin America has been largely military in nature, whereby Latin American militaries are encouraged, funded, equipped, and trained, and this type of reaction became more pronounced after 2001. Military aid moved steadily upward from 2001 to 2010. The Obama administration has shifted the balance of aid more toward economic as opposed to military and police, so that the latter is typically less than half the total.²⁵ That marks a change from the Bush administration, which had a heavy focus on Colombia.

Summary and Conclusion

Who is in fact a terrorist? Terrorism in Latin America comes in different forms, some more virulent than others. The threat varies widely across the region, different political actors define “terrorism” in different ways, and the legacies of dictatorship and repression in many countries leave serious concerns about using a military solution. During the Cold War, the solution often became worse than the problem, given the thousands killed in the name of national security.

For the U.S. government, realist assumptions are prevalent. Terrorism and the drug trade are national security threats and must therefore be met with force. Echoing the Cold War, the argument goes that not only does the use of counterterrorist force improve U.S. security, but also it contributes to the process of democratization in Latin America. Institutions have been slow to respond. The lack of consensus about what terrorism is makes it difficult to generate any coherent response.

The U.S. government currently considers drug trafficking to be the most pressing security threat in the region. That concern has shifted from Colombia toward Central America and Mexico, both of which are reeling from the rise in violence. Colombia is more stable than it used to be, but drug production has grown again in Bolivia and Peru, where it had previously decreased. The balloon effect therefore is present, but what country is squeezed changes over time.

The idea that drugs should prompt a military response is not universally accepted in Latin America, particularly in Andean countries with long histories of indigenous use of coca. Backlashes to U.S. drug policies have already appeared, along with skepticism that U.S. definitions of terrorism should apply to the region. This relates to dependency theory. The Bolivian government considered itself too closely tied to the United States and so cut those connections entirely, choosing instead to enlist the assistance of Brazil. That sort of intraregional cooperation is at the heart of the policy prescriptions for dependency theory. The slow push for discussion about decriminalization fits in the same mold. These new ideas may eventually become embedded in institutions, which would change the entire region's focus.

Research Questions

1. Analyze the potential problems and benefits of using crop substitution as an incentive to stop the production of coca.
2. What have been the most effective means of defeating terrorist threats in Latin America? To what degree have these means affected democracy?
3. What are the parallels between the current "war on terrorism" in Latin America and the "war on Communism" during the Cold War? Are there key differences?
4. Analyze the development of the "certification" policy. How effective has it been in combating drug traffickers?
5. Have Latin American countries interpreted the threat of terrorism differently than the United States has? In what ways, and why?

Notes

- 1 Hosenball and Isikoff 2004.
- 2 Sullivan and Beittel 2013, Summary and 32.
- 3 Combs 2003, 10.
- 4 United States Code Online.
- 5 Quoted in Martynov 2003, 94.
- 6 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2013.
- 7 Crandall 2002.
- 8 Kirk 2003, 182.

- 9 Kirk 2004.
- 10 Ledebur 2005, 157.
- 11 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime website.
- 12 United States Department of State 2014.
- 13 Human Rights Watch 2014.
- 14 Morris 1999.
- 15 Seelke 2014.
- 16 Noroeste.com 2013 (translation by the author).
- 17 Cardoso et al. 2009.
- 18 Calmes 2012.
- 19 Quoted in Clayton 1999, 279.
- 20 National Institute on Drug Abuse 2014.
- 21 Truth and Reconciliation website.
- 22 Quoted in McPherson 2006, 202.
- 23 *Havana Times* 2014.
- 24 Sikkink 2004, 218.
- 25 Isacson et al., 2013.

Further Sources

Books

- Crandall, Russell. *Driven by Drugs: U.S. Policy Toward Colombia*, 2nd edn (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008). A concise and well-written analysis of the formulation of U.S. policy, the decision-making process within the U.S. government, and the manner in which drugs became the overriding factor in U.S.–Colombian relations.
- Bunck, Julie Marie and Michael Ross Fowler. *Bribes, Bullets, and Intimidation: Drug Trafficking and the Law in Central America* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2012). Analyses of Central America countries center on the reasons for and development of drug trafficking as well as the effects it has. This includes the specific routes being used and the geography of each country.
- Kenny, Paul and Monica Serrano (eds). *Mexico's Security Failure: Collapse into Criminal Violence* (New York: Routledge, 2012). This book analyzes the rapid increase in drug-related violence in Mexico, using an intermestic approach that explores both U.S.–Mexican relations and Mexican domestic politics.
- Stavridis, James. *Partnership for the Americas: Western Hemisphere Strategy and U.S. Southern Command* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2010). Written by an admiral who is the former head of United States Southern Command, the book provides useful insights into how the U.S. military views security in Latin America. It is not common to get extended discussion of Latin America from high-level military officers.
- Younger, Coletta A., and Eileen Rosin (eds). *Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2005). This edited volume provides not only case studies of numerous countries and overall assessment of the effects of U.S. drug policy, but also a substantial Latin American voice. It is the result of a three-year study by the Washington Office on Latin America.

Websites

OAS, Inter-American Committee against Terrorism. This is the official site of the counterterrorist organization within the OAS. It contains all the relevant hemispheric documents on the topic, in addition to news and press releases, resolutions, and events. It also includes a useful list of links to other international websites dedicated to the issue of terrorism. <http://cicte.oas.org>

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Peru). Available in both English and Spanish, this is the official website of the commission, and it includes the entire text of the final report (nine separate volumes detailed the violence). It also provides complete descriptions of the commission's work, funding, press releases, and transcripts of meetings with individuals and political parties. <http://www.cverdad.org.pe/>

FARC Peace Delegation. The FARC's official site (in English) representing the negotiations with the Colombian government. It is a sophisticated site, with documents, news articles, communiqués, and even its own Twitter feed. <http://farc-epeace.org/>

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The website provides reports and data not only on drugs (such as the World Drug Report), but also on terrorism more generally. Although the focus is global, the search engine can be used to find information on specific countries or regions. <http://www.unodc.org>

Washington Office on Latin America. This think tank, based in Washington, D.C., pays particular attention to U.S. security policy in Latin America. Its website includes news stories, in-depth analyses, and reports, in addition to podcasts and a Twitter feed. <http://www.wola.org/>

Glossary

Autogolpe a political process whereby a president suspends the constitution and dissolves government institutions that block his or her power.

Backward linkages when local businesses are launched as a means to link up with a multinational corporation that has established an industry in the country.

Balloon effect like a balloon, when coca production is “squeezed” in one area, it expands in a neighboring area. It refers primarily to the Andean region.

Banana republic derogatory reference to a small country (usually Central American or Caribbean) that is deemed backward and weak.

Capital flight when investors believe that a country is experiencing a level of instability that may endanger their capital, they move it to banks in a different country. This, in turn, tends to exacerbate instability.

Certification the process by which the United States determines whether a given country is participating sufficiently in the fight against drug trafficking; denial of certification entails the loss of certain types of aid.

Chicago Boys in the 1970s, a group of Chilean government officials, many of whom had been educated at the University of Chicago’s Department of Economics, applied their education by drastically reducing the role of the state in the economy.

Cocaleros the Spanish name for people—particularly in Bolivia and Peru—of indigenous descent who commonly farm coca.

Debt swapping the process by which debtor countries exchange current loan conditions (e.g., interest and payment schedules) for different ones, thus avoiding short-term economic crisis.

Disappeared referring to an individual who was arrested for political reasons, but was never seen again.

Domino effect during the Cold War, a line of dominoes became a metaphor for Latin American countries. If one domino were pushed, i.e., if one country fell to communism, then the others next to it would also begin falling.

Embargo the prohibition of trade with a specific country, for political reasons.

Fascism an ideology that focuses on the unity and harmony of a country, embodied in a single leader; it is highly nationalist and antidemocratic.

Guerrilla a Spanish term that refers to a type of irregular soldier who uses small units, knowledge of terrain, support of the local population, and hit-and-run tactics to defeat an enemy that is more powerful (such as a standing army).

Hegemony this refers to being the most powerful state in a given international political system.

Import substitution industrialization (ISI) a strategy of economic development that entails protecting certain native industries with tariffs, thus substituting native goods for foreign imports. The goal is to remove those tariffs once native industries have become competitive.

International Criminal Court a United Nations court that entered into force in 2002. It can prosecute individual citizens from participating states for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. It has the authority to act if the member state is unwilling or unable to do so.

Iran-Contra the term refers to the scandal in the 1980s, in which officials of the Reagan administration sold weapons to Iran, and used the proceeds to continue illegal funding to the Contra rebels in Nicaragua.

Liberation theology a current of thought in the Catholic Church in Latin America, most prominently in the 1970s and 1980s. It argued that the Church had an obligation to take active steps to liberate the poor and dispossessed; it was highly controversial, since it involved priests becoming deeply involved in politics. It was condemned by the Vatican.

“Lost Decade” the devastating economic decline in Latin America in the 1980s led many observers to label it as lost, as the poverty rate and unemployment rose.

Maquiladoras a factory, usually on the Mexican side of the U.S.–Mexico border (though they can exist in any country), that receives materials or parts tariff free from the United States, then assembles them and exports the finished product back to the United States.

Nationalization the process by which a state takes ownership over a specific asset, usually from a private individual or corporation.

Neoliberalism an economic strategy based on capitalist market principles, with a minimal role for the state and a strong emphasis on private entrepreneurship.

Neopopulism a style of personalistic, top-down rule that involves leaders engaging those who feel excluded from the political system.

Nongovernmental organizations organizations without formal ties to governments that focus on issues they believe governments have not adequately addressed, such as human rights.

Nongovernmental terrorism terrorist activity that is perpetrated by individuals or groups not formally associated with a government.

Pan Americanism the idea that there exists a commonality among nations of the Americas, which binds them together and should make cooperation easier to obtain.

Petrodollars a reference to money made by oil-producing states from the sale of oil, which is then reinvested in Western banks. In the 1970s, U.S. banks began to lend that money in large quantities to Latin American countries.

Plebiscite a vote in which the entire electorate chooses whether to accept or reject a specific proposal; also known as a referendum.

Populism a style of political leadership in which a highly charismatic individual organizes a large following based on criticism of the status quo; it often comprises people who previously had been marginalized.

Shock therapy a popular term for the rapid market-oriented reforms put in place by many Latin American governments.

State-sponsored terrorism terrorist activity that is perpetrated by agents of a government.

Structural adjustment the process by which debtor countries are compelled to transform their economies in order to qualify for new loans and receive debt relief. It entails a neoliberal focus on privatization and free trade.

Tariff a tax imposed on foreign imports. It is used to raise revenue and also to protect domestic industries.

Washington Consensus a term used to describe the belief in the United States and in international financial institutions that neoliberal policies constitute the most effective way of promoting economic development.

White man's burden the perception in the United States (and Europe) of an obligation to "civilize" countries with darker-skinned natives, thus teaching them how to run a country "correctly."

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