

c.4: International Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Latin America

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Introduction

We have already discussed some of the underlying tensions and deeply historically-rooted issues that Latin America faces, including defining a clear identity; socioeconomic instability and poverty; and external domination through imperialism. In a sense, revolution was both a reflection of the churning of these different forces and also an attempt to deal with them in one system-changing blow. We saw that the promise of revolution did not really pan out. In this chapter, we add to our analysis of these issues a renewed emphasis on external domination, which as we have seen is part of the reason for the failure of revolution. External domination of the region seems rooted in the very identity issues we discussed in the first chapter- what is Latin America and its identification with outside referents to define itself. However, most students also become interested in Latin America as a region oppressed and repressed by outside forces. Inimical outside forces are perhaps the most important element of Latin American political discourse. Whereas the Spanish Imperial court and British gunships were considered the roots of the development problem in previous times, U.S. foreign policy is the principal bogeyman for most of the current century. Anti-U.S. justifications for problems or repression are part of the everyday language of the Latin American politician. When rationing takes place in Cuba, all of the blame is placed on the U.S. When Hugo Chavez fails to redistribute oil wealth in Venezuela, U.S. pressure on the oil market is a reason given for the lack of progress.

This brings up the question of the degree to which the U.S. is to blame for Latin America's problems. Regardless of the answer to the first question, we can not just stop with moral indignation. We must also consider how U.S. foreign policy can be changed to avoid outcomes that have a negative impact for both the U.S. and Latin America. We can not definitively answer these questions here, since it is an issue for a deep historical analysis and interpretation, particularly requiring a close understanding of the complexities of US foreign policy. But we can look to three elements here to make a good start in this quest. The first is an understanding of international relations theory, which can give us some tools for analyzing the interactions between the U.S. and Latin America. The second is a brief historical analysis of U.S. interactions in Latin America using international relations theory. The third is a look at what tools international relations theory suggests might be available for Latin Americans to gain greater independence from the US, as well as a brief look at the ways domestic pressures could be put on U.S. foreign policy decision-making to improve its outcomes. Unlike most of the discussion of the U.S. in Latin America, we will move beyond the biblical approaches of blame and the inevitability of good (pure) and evil actors to try to understand *why* the U.S. has acted the way it has, and how counter-productive U.S. policies *can change*.

A Brief Introduction to International Relations Theories

Though seldom married, international relations theories are quite helpful in understanding area studies. There is no area in the world which is not shaped by the pressures and influences of external actors. As well, every area of the world has an important intra-regional component of state-to-state interaction, which is the main focus of analysis of international relations. In developing countries, external actors including governments, corporations, and non-governmental organizations (ngos) to a lesser extent, can have as much or more influence on domestic politics as domestic actors. Developing countries generally rely heavily on imports of capital and goods. Developing countries often suffer from poorly developed institutions and factionalization, which greatly diminishes their ability to resist international forces. Despite all of this, we will see that there are a number of strategies suggested by international relations theories that could improve the degree of independence of developing countries.

Modern international relations theories are designed to analyze the causes, dynamics, and outcomes of world wars. Though the ultimate aim may be prevention, they are unbiased and analytical in their approach. In other words, they do not seek to place judgments on principles of right or wrong, rather they attempt to explain the interactions among nations. There are three types of theories that we can discuss: realism, neo-liberalism, and collective action approaches based on liberalism. It is important to point out “neoliberal” international relations theories are distinct from neoliberal economic policies, which is the common usage of the term. Realism has been the predominant strand of thinking since World War II. All three theories start with the same basic assumptions. The first is that the main actors in international relations are states. The second is that the beginning state of international relations is one of anarchy, or disorder. The real differentiating point regards the common goal of such theorizing, namely what can be done to create a lasting peace. Realism is the most pessimistic, positing that no alliance or coalition of states will be permanent. Since every state defines its interests differently, there may be overlap, however, the fact that interests change means that no coalition can be permanent. Realism therefore proposes a strong national military presence to defend a nation’s pecuniary interests.

Neo-liberalism is different in the sense that it believes that some non-state actors, including multinational corporations and international organizations, could have an effect on international relations. From the point of view of corporations, stability and cooperation are necessary for economic gains. Therefore corporations will both independently and through their governments promote alliances and cooperation. Beyond that, a variant of neo-liberalism called regime theory predicts that more stable alliances and institutions for cooperation can be constructed internationally. Thus, a stable regime of trading rules, such as the GATS, and an international trading institution, such as the WTO, help to smooth out cooperation. States are able to create norms, rules, and principles that allow for longer-lasting cooperation to the benefit of all, even if they may have to give up some short-term interests. Most neo-liberals would not claim that economic interests will predominate over the basic insecurity caused by anarchy in the system. Rather, they are suggesting that economic interests change the calculus of states and that regimes enhance the possibilities for cooperation. A less well-developed set of

approaches could be distinguished as collective action theories. Collective action theories are the most optimistic in the sense that they believe strong international organizations can be created to ensure peace. The most obvious example is the United Nations' peacekeeping forces. Over time, the collective action of the dominant state(s) through international peacekeeping and resolution organizations can enforce peace. Any state that violates international peace through belligerence will be punished through the swift collective action of all or many of the others.

Latin Americans have developed their own views of international relations, including some that have widespread utility. The most predominant school of thought has been an imperialist dependency view. By imperialism, Latin Americans look to the long and continuing history of political and military interference by external actors in the region, including the European powers and Spain back to independence and colonial times. By dependency, Latin Americans refer to an ongoing reliance on external markets, technology, finance, and even intellectual sources and culture. Latin Americans see these and other means of dependency as ways in which they remain beholden to external actors, even if the period of overt military action has dissipated. The key question for Latin Americans has been how to break or reduce forms of dependency and increase their relative bargaining power in international relations. As we shall see, they have struggled with this question in both the political and economic context throughout their history.

In Latin America, there have been relatively few intra-regional international wars. However, if we want to understand U.S. foreign policy, we should understand the schools of thought that guide it first. If the level of interactions between the U.S. and Latin America includes economic as well as military actions, we will have to evaluate the extent to which international relations theories explain the former as well as the latter. As Table 4.1 below shows there are huge power asymmetries between the U.S. and her neighbors.

Table 4.1: Rank Order of Western Hemisphere Countries, Japan, and Europe by Size of Economy and Population

	GDP		Population
Japan	4841.6	Japan	126.9
European Union	7894.5	EU	378
United States	9837.4	United States	281.6
Canada	687.9	Brazil	170.4
Brazil	595.5	Mexico	98.0
Mexico	574.5	Colombia	42.3
Argentina	285.0	Argentina	37.0
Venezuela	121.3	Canada	30.8
Colombia	81.3	Peru	25.7
Chile	70.5	Venezuela	24.2
Peru	53.5	Chile	15.2
Uruguay	19.7	Ecuador	12.6
Costa Rica	15.9	Cuba	11.2
Ecuador	13.6	Bolivia	8.3

Bolivia	8.3	Paraguay	5.5
Paraguay	7.5	Nicaragua	5.1
Nicaragua	2.4		
Units	\$billions, current		Millions
Notes: Source: World Bank, WDI; EU; year = 2000			

This table shows what international relations theories suggest- that power asymmetries lead to domination by one actor over another. If we added again the fact that several multinational corporations are considerably larger than Latin American national economies, we can see that the possibilities for both revolution and autonomy from outside forces seems impossible. It could lead us to conclude that in terms of the world economy and world politics, most Latin American states stand little chance of gaining independence. However, there are a variety of strategies that smaller actors can pursue to try to limit or dampen outside influence, and to gain relative degrees of autonomy from outside forces. We touch on some of these in the concluding section of this chapter.

Understanding U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Latin America Through International Relations Theory

For most, the history of U.S. interactions in Latin America can anger a person who grows up believing in the virtues of a free and democratic society. As scholars, however, we should rest our judgments until we can understand why the U.S. has acted in such a manner, so that we can then move more effectively to what can be done to improve the situation in the future. Here is a brief typology-chronology of U.S. foreign policy towards the region.

The first period, roughly from the founding of the U.S. in 1776 until approximately the 1870s can be described as one of benign neglect. The U.S. did not exist before that point, though the British pursued their colonial interests in competition with the Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch, and other European powers in Latin America. From the time of independence until the early 19th century, both regions were in the throes of nation-formation. Latin American nations were in the process of independence and undergoing a long period of national consolidation. By contrast, the U.S. came together with a minimum of internal conflict, and thus a great advantage in expanding its territory and pursuing its interests. The first and most infamous declaration of such interests was the Monroe Doctrine, created in 1823. We should remember that at the time of its pronouncement, the stated intentions of the doctrine, which declared that any European intervention in the Western Hemisphere would be opposed by the U.S., rang quite hollow in terms of the total inability of the U.S. to enforce it. However, the Monroe Doctrine is important as a statement of principle, that the U.S. saw geographically close Latin America as an important regional sphere of influence.

What really gave the U.S. the possibility of engaging in imperial activities like its European counterparts was precisely the upheaval from international rivalry within

Europe. Just as Napoleon's invasion of Spain and Portugal spelt the last gasp of the crumbling empires, and opened the way for Latin American independence, Europe's self-destructive wars allowed the U.S. to begin pursuing its Western Hemisphere interests with little opposition. The foremost imperial activity was pursuit of territory. Not only was the U.S. more internally unified than Latin America at an early stage, for a variety of reasons, but partly through protectionism, it was able to develop an industrial base early on that gave it military and economic strength. The growing economic strength vis à vis its Latin American rivals began to lead to short-term interventions in order to collect debts from nations in the regions.

The annexation of Texas, and the subsequent seizure of a large part of Mexico's territory in the war of 1846-8, demonstrated that the U.S. was intent to join Europe in colonial and imperial pursuits and signaled a more activist phase in the U.S. relationship with Latin America. Subsequent pursuits of territory included Alaska and Hawaii. These efforts were only interrupted by the U.S. Civil War, which lasted from 1860-65. The Civil War concerned a variety of issues besides slavery, primarily states' rights, but also with some differences in regional economic interests. The war devastated the country for a good 2 decades, but by the 1880s, the U.S. was back in business. The slave-owning interests of the South had long coveted expansion southward into areas where plantation agriculture would be viable. By the early 20th century, the U.S. was not nearly on a par with the large European nations, but it was ready to take control the dying remnants of the Spanish Empire in terms of these interests. Through the Spanish-American War of 1898, the U.S. was able to seize Cuba, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico for its empire. As we recounted earlier, the blunting of the Cuban independence movement set up the Cuban Revolution later in the century.

With the coming of World Wars I and II, the European powers effectively extinguished themselves from predominance in international relations. During the wars themselves, the U.S. tended to pursue a policy of benign neglect once again towards Latin America. It needed to ensure that Latin America would not support the fascist rivals it wanted to defeat. Thus, this third phase of U.S.-Latin American relations can be distinguished by "the Good Neighbor" policy proposed by President Roosevelt during the World War II period. During this period, Latin American nations had an opening and a possibility for relative gains vis a vis the U.S. For example, in 1930, Pres. Lazaro Cardenas nationalized the Mexican oilfields from U.S. owners, a move that probably would have been strongly opposed just 20 years earlier by the U.S. During World War II, Pres. Vargas of Brazil was able to negotiate help in building the first steel mill in Latin America in exchange for his support of the U.S. war effort. In general, this was the beginnings of Latin American industrialization, which was spurred on by a combination of a lack of manufactured imports and revenues from their commodity exports. We will discuss the details in a later chapter, but for now, let us summarize that the World Wars gave Latin America a brief window to both begin industrialization and to move their level of independence from the U.S. forward.

By the end of World War II, the U.S. was the only real world power that was unscathed by major war. The U.S. had also become the engine of the world economy, a

position it continues to occupy. From the 1950s, the Soviet Union began to rival the U.S., both ideologically in its promotion of international communism, and more so militarily in its support of Marxist revolutions, as we discussed in the last chapter. However, in hindsight we must recognize that the Soviet Union was never an equal rival to the U.S. because its economic ability was greatly over-estimated. During the 1950s, the Soviet Union might have been equal in terms of overall indices of industrialization, but as time wore on, it fell far behind in terms of technology, productivity, industrial base, and overall wealth. In fact, most of the Soviet Union's claims to superpower status rested squarely on domination of Eastern European nations and its vast military and nuclear arsenal. In short, the Soviet Union never really had the resources to compete with the U.S., and even less so in the remote Western Hemisphere.

The end of World War II brought with it a new age of collective action in terms of international institutions designed by the U.S., including the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank. The end of the war also resurrected the principle of self-sovereignty, bringing to an end colonialism in most of Asia and Africa. In Latin America, the U.S. sponsored the formation of the United Nations' Economic Commission for Latin America (after pressure from the region) to help in development efforts; the Organization of American States; and the Inter-American Development Bank, which became the foremost regional institutions of collective action. With the end of military prerogatives, the 1950s period of the U.S. relationship towards Latin America can be considered as one of neo-imperialism. While there were some interventions, such as in Guatemala in 1956, the frequency and scope of the pursuit of U.S. military interests took more of a backseat to economic interests. U.S. multinational corporations worked hand-in-hand with the industrialization policies of Latin American countries, providing technology, manufactured inputs, and capital. This relationship has been described by Peter Evans as "the Triple Alliance," including the Latin American state, local bourgeoisie, and foreign capital, and we will evaluate it in detail in the chapter on economic development. This fourth period of neo-imperialism ended, as we noted in the last chapter, with the coming of the Cold War to Western Hemisphere in the form of the Cuban Revolution of 1959.

After the Cuban Revolution, U.S. foreign policy wavered at first towards a cooperative form, but ended up back to a harsh military stance reminiscent of the early 20th century. Thus, the fifth period of the Alliance for Progress lasted only a few early years of Pres. Kennedy's term, from 1961-64. During this period, U.S. foreign policy began to openly promote economic development and even limited redistribution projects in Latin America. The U.S. changed its active support of conservative forces in Latin America towards more reformist, often Christian Democratic candidates, and openly supported measured land reform and other poverty-reducing initiatives. There may have been elements of altruism, particularly within the Agency for International Development (AID), but the real thinking behind the Alliance for Progress was that the poor and marginalized were hotbeds for Communist support. Reducing poverty would help to win over these poverty-stricken masses. This thinking was informed, of course, by the strong support that the Viet Cong enjoyed, and that the U.S. was never able to overcome, in Viet Nam.

However, the period of good feelings and reformism did not last long. With the passing of Pres. Kennedy, Pres. Johnson took a much more militaristic stance towards anti-Communism, beginning with the invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965. We can call this the sixth phase of Inter-American relations, characterized by military anti-communism. Johnson pursued a variety of actions, including open support of Latin America's military regimes, to fight communist guerrilla activities throughout the region. Pres. Nixon continued these actions, with his attempts to subvert Pres. Allende of Chile, though most of the focus of U.S. foreign policy was now on ending the Viet Nam war gracefully.

U.S. foreign policy was an important, but certainly not the only, factor in the upheaval in Latin America during these years. The Soviet Union's beachhead in Cuba allowed for active support of guerrilla movements in the region. Inspired by the ideals of socialism, and the longer-term bases of working class parties, a large part of the younger Latin American generation joined or sympathized with leftist causes. Latin American societies internal fragility, created by the linchpin of poverty and gross inequity, came to the forefront, only in the new form of socialism vs. anti-Communism. While the U.S. may have been pursuing its international rivalry with the Soviet Union, therefore, in Latin America, the conflict was laden with class terms. That the U.S. supported Latin American military regimes does not diminish the fact that the Latin American military has been a long-standing traditional supporter of conservative forces in the region from the period of colonialism. Unfortunately, the perceived urgency of the situation, the internal strife, and the unrealistic expectations of the revolutionary movements never really gave the reformist solution a chance to succeed.

The Latin American military eventually won most of these battles by the mid-1970s. With the Carter Administration in 1976, another brief experiment in a healthier U.S. foreign policy began the seventh phase of the relationship. Pres. Carter had a uniquely moral, many say naïve, perspective on U.S. foreign policy, at least initially. Carter was responsible for abandoning tinpot dictators Somoza, Marcos, and the Shah; pushing the hand-over of the Panama Canal back to Panama; actively pursued human rights agenda; and, for the first time, attempting to act multilaterally through regional organizations, all with considerable success in hindsight, early in his Administration. Unfortunately, as with Viet Nam, events in other regions changed the calculus of the Administration. With the hostage crisis in Iran unfolding, and the anti-U.S. announcements of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, as well as stagflation in the economy at home, the Administration began to move towards a tougher stance on foreign policy.

This brief experiment in a more enlightened foreign policy was quickly ejected by the conservative Reagan Administration which took over in 1980 on a platform of active resistance to Communism. For the first time, a U.S. administration openly pursued funding of anti-Communist guerrillas, first in Afghanistan, and later in Nicaragua. The policy had considerable success in toppling and pressuring those regimes, but in other areas, such as El Salvador, the policy reached a stalemate. The arms-for-hostages deal with the Iranians, and the funding of the Contras to fight against the Sandinistas with

little apparent success, and the widely criticized invasion of Grenada, created domestic pressure on the Administration to re-think its strategy. The Cold War era military pursuits of the Reagan Administration were overtaken by the growing debt crisis in Latin America. As Latin American nations sunk further into economic depression, the Administration began to pursue a variety of attempts to salvage the situation for U.S. banks. These attempts had a mixed success, in the sense that they prevented total bankruptcy, but did not really re-start Latin American economies. Two terms of the Reagan Administration saw a serious deterioration of the gains in human rights that had been achieved under the Carter Administration. On the other hand, the Reagan Administration for the first time openly pushed democratization in the region. Policies for the promotion of democracy, including electoral commissions, political party formation, and freedoms of the press, had previously been viewed as out of the purview of U.S. interests.

Reagan's successor, Bush, was not much different in his general view of international relations, but he did seem to pursue a less bellicose and more diplomatic means that eventually took shape into an 8th phase, one that presently continues. Bush's main effort during this period of 1988-92 was to move beyond rejoicing of the fall of the Soviet Union to creation of a new vision of U.S. foreign policy after the Cold War. As the only superpower now left in the world, U.S. military interests took a considerable backseat to economic pursuits. Thus, the Bush Administration's vision of a free trade area of the Americas began a new period in which Latin America was viewed as a key, if junior partner, in economic competition with East Asia and Europe. With the development of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1992, the Administration moved U.S.-Latin American relations to a new era, one focused more economic than military concerns. This shift paralleled the internal changes in Latin America, namely the defeat of leftist guerrillas and the acceptance of market principles by the countries in the region. As in previous periods under Carter and Reagan, events in the Middle East took most of the Administration's foreign policy attention.

The Clinton Administration, which took over in 1992-2000, attempted to expand beyond the free trade vision of Latin America to a more activist stance on democratization a la Reagan and a more multilateral stance internationally. The active pursuit of peacekeeping in Somalia and democracy building in Haiti were noble experiments, but outright failures. Clinton was unable to move the free trade initiatives beyond the agreement with Mexico, though the NAFTA was consummated. Clinton's domestic scandals and the general lack of direction in his administration seem to have precluded what otherwise would have been a rife time for activism in the region.

After Clinton, Pres. Bush Jr. returned to Cold War principles. Promising talks about migration in the Americas and expanding free trade have been hijacked by events. The bombing of the World Trade Center in 2001 has placed the entire attention of the Administration on terrorism and the Middle East. Latin American initiatives so far seem to be focused on Plan Colombia, an attempt to aid the Colombian military's fight with the narco-trafficking guerrillas. Meanwhile the negotiation process of the free trade

agreement for the Americas has seemingly ground to a halt. Chavez suggests he offers a new anti-American alternative, a claim we discuss further in the final chapter.

Our brief review of U.S.-Latin American relations shows that while Latin Americans may perceive a situation of imperialist dependency, U.S. decision-makers have tended to see Latin America through the realist perspective. Realism was the dominant paradigm of the Cold War era, and explains the priorities the U.S. placed in terms of security above even economic goals. The U.S. public and private sectors tend to view Latin America as a priority only when there is an immediate crisis, and as just one segment of an international foreign policy. Only in times of crisis has Latin America become a priority for any U.S. decision-maker, and even in those unusual cases, such as Carter, events in other regions, particularly Asia and the Middle East, tend to overtake any new initiatives. Thus, U.S. foreign policy has tended to be inconsistent both over time, ignoring differences within the region, and at times self-defeating in the sense of not looking at the underlying socioeconomic conditions that lead Latin Americans towards strong anti-imperialism and revolutionary dogma.

New Challengers: Narco-trafficking Guerrillas in Colombia and Peru

Besides the Zapatistas, whom we discuss in Chapter 7, the remaining armed struggles are in Colombia and Peru. In those regions, Marxist guerrilla groups dating back to the golden age of revolution in the 1960s have found a new lease on life in the form of narcotrafficking. It is important to remind ourselves of the basic facts of the narcotrafficking market. The use of illegal drugs creates unbelievable family and social problems, as well as tearing asunder the potential of many individuals. However, there is also a spectrum of use and addiction, so we have to keep in mind that the use of illegal drugs is something that is fueled by middle- and upper-class incomes in the North. From that point of view, as well as the tremendous traffic across Northern borders every day (hundreds of thousands of vehicles), effective interdiction of supply seems a dubitable proposition. In fact, success in controlling supply would have the ironic effect of driving up the price of the drug, thereby increasing the incentives for smuggling. Meanwhile any loosening of restrictions of drug bans in the North, and particularly the US, bring up vociferous opposition among those who claim that it would encourage further and more widespread abuse on the one hand, and effectively give a message that society condones the use of drugs. The hypocrisy of the treatment of alcohol as well as the historical failures of prohibitions on both alcohol and prostitution, are part of the ongoing debate.

Some European countries, such as Britain and the Netherlands, have begun to focus on a “harm reduction” policy, which includes both enforcement and a steady provision of safe needles and sometimes methadone (a substitute for heroin) to meet demand. Intravenous drug use is one of the primary means by which the HIV (AIDS) virus has spread, so safe needles are doubly important. The idea is to reduce the pressures on the addict which lead to crime, marginalization, and emergency health care costs, all of which cost society. Part of the problem with these programs so far is the lack of investment and accessibility to treatment centers. Drug abuse is no longer just a

Northern problem. Though there are no clear statistics, addiction seems to be spreading throughout the developing world, with very little capability of dealing with the social effects. In a strange twist of history, the revolutionary groups in some Latin American countries have been able to survive the withdrawal of Soviet support by switching the ultra-capitalist enterprise of narco-trafficking.

In Peru, the Sendero Luminoso (SL) was a guerrilla group founded on the Maoist principles of its leader, Abimael Guzman. Guzman was a Professor at the University of Ayacucho, the indigenous capital of Peru, and the center for strong dissent against the historical negligence of Lima, the modern capital. Guzman saw the possibilities for revolution in Peru as coming from the poor indigenous majority who could use the terrain of the mountainous highlands as a perfect place for guerrilla tactics. The fact is that the SL was one of a number of groups active in Peru at the time, including most prominently the MRTA (*Movimiento Tupac Amaru*). The latter group took its name and inspiration from an Inca leader of a rebellion during Spanish colonialism. More proximately, the writings of Victor Haya de la Torre in the early part of the 20th century had brought the “indigenous problem” to the front and center of Peruvian consciousness. Peru’s economy has traditionally rested on mining, which, as in the case of Bolivia, has strong characteristics of concentration and dependence on outside investment. Peru is also one of the countries with the worst land-distribution in the world. A 1968 “progressive” coup by the military began land reform, but was limited in nature and success, as it largely ignored the highland areas. Thus, Peru continues to provide a strong breeding ground for marginalization and dissent.

Like other revolutionary movements, SL’s leadership was hardly grassroots. Guzman’s leadership cadre tended to come from university-educated students who saw Marxism as valid explanations for the backwards conditions and inequalities of their country. Still, SL found some support among the highlands populations. Indigenous groups in this area had never really received public services or benign attention from Lima. Moreover, the terrain and the lack of resources meant that both infrastructure and security were lacking. From the 1970s, SL could provide those involved in coca growing some security, and, on occasion, organize public works. They occasionally could redistribute land by fiat. As the economic stagnation of the 1980s and early 1990s dragged on in Peru, the guerrilla tactics of SL grew more bold. SL began striking urban targets, frequently creating power outages in the capital. The Peruvian Army was ineffective and unable to track down SL, due to its cell organization of decentralized commanders. SL also began to enter into urban shantytown areas, organizing residents. However, as SL seemed to be gaining, the Army employed ever more brutal tactics to round up suspects, which, in the usual predictable pattern, were matched by SL, including kidnappings and summary executions of suspected informers. As a result, SL became a source of terror for the local population, just like the Army. In order to continue to fund itself, SL had begun to take over the fields of the coca farmers it once defended and to enforce price and transportation monopolies. By the mid-1990s, with the ascendancy of President Alberto Fujimori, a new phase of the war began. Fujimori declared a state of siege, suspending civil rights, and engaged in an all out war on SL. Fujimori offered amnesties and other rewards for those giving information. He began to pay some

attention to the urban shantytowns, and there as well as in rural towns began to organize “self-defense” forces which have later been copied by Colombia. Fujimori’s big breakthrough was the capture of Guzman, placing him in a surreal cage for a tv show trial afterwards. Thought SL was supposed to be quite decentralized, the capture of Guzman seems to have left the organization reeling. Still, the conditions are ripe for the resurgence of a similar type movement in Peru is quite possible as both the means (narco-trafficking) and the dissent of large proportions of the population continue through one failure after another of governments. In recent years, there have been signs of a resurgence of SL-type activities in Peru.

Like Peru, Colombia has a high degree of income concentration and urbanization, as well as large swaths of terrain (jungle and highlands) that have been outside of the control of governments. Unlike Peru, Colombia does not have a large and restive indigenous population. It also has had a much more diversified economy, and considerably more stable macroeconomic policies. However, Colombia has a history of civil war, including the War of 1000 days, from 1899-1902, and *La Violencia* (the violence), from 1948-57. In both of these wars, hundreds of thousands were killed. The latter war was one over control of the government between the Liberal and Conservative parties. The country seemed to be pacified under a power sharing agreement until the 1960s, when leftist guerrilla movements inspired by Cuba became active. As in Peru, concentration of land holdings spawned rural dissent, providing a base for guerrillas. A number of groups were active including M-19, primarily in urban areas, the ELN (*Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional*, or National Liberation Army) in the northeast region of the country and the FARC (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Colombianas*) in the South. As in Peru, the FARC was a marginal group, and paid relatively little attention as the Government was much more concerned by the other two opponents.

By the mid-1970s, Colombia had become the major supplier of drugs to the US, when cocaine became the drug of choice, replacing heroin. With the cocaine boom, the supplier market gradually became concentrated into the hands of a few cartels, which were known by the name of their heads (eg Pablo Escobar) and by the names of the areas where they were headquartered (Medellin and Cali). So, when the FARC began to enter into narco-trafficking in the late 1970s, it drew hostility more from the Northern-based cartels than from the Government. The Government concentrated its resources on the drug cartels, gaining some success by capturing Escobar in the 1980s. However, drug cartels continue to duke it out with guerrillas and others for control of narcotrafficking.

The Colombian Government’s policies towards the guerrillas from the 1980s have veered from giving amnesties and pursuing peace towards all-out war and back again. Under Pres. Betancur in the early 1980s, a cease-fire was signed with the FARC and M-19. The idea was to allow leftist parties to form, giving the guerrillas the chance to transform into political activists and put down their weapons. This led to the formation of the Union Patrioca, a left-wing party that attracted many former adherents of M-19. The second wing of the new policy was to offer major public spending on social services. However, the second initiative was blocked in the Colombian legislature, and the death knell of the peace occurred with the FARC’s bold seizure of the Palace of Justice, the

head of Colombia's supreme court, in 1985. New President Barco began with a tough approach, cracking down on both the drug cartels and the guerrillas. However, Barco also attempted to revive the social program aspects for the rural and urban shantytown centers of the violence, again, with little apparent success. Barco did manage to get the M-19 to disarm in order to participate in the next election. This dramatic move inspired a brief hope that Colombia was turning the corner and that the left could become viable members of the democracy. Unfortunately, this hope and the possibility that members of the FARC would become "civilianized" was soon shattered with M-19 political candidates including the key leader Galan. Under new President Gaviria, a renewed tough approach was instilled, with a direct attack on FARC's strongholds in the South, including La Uribe. As in the case of SL, the government's crackdown and brutal tactics were matched by the FARC, who went on a wave of sabotage, extortions, and kidnapping, taking the war for the first time directly to the cities, particularly Bogota, which had seemed to be relative islands of peace in the war. Attempts at negotiations went nowhere, and the democratically-converted former guerrillas of M-19 and ELN continued to show little success at elections. Frustration and fear among the population, as well as alleged ties to the Cali cartel, led to the election of Samper in 1994. Samper's ties did not prevent a major assault on the drug cartels, this time backed with major support from the US. Ironically, the success with the drug cartels simply opened the market for greater expansion of the FARC in narco-trafficking. The new resources as well as the Government's agenda opened the way for the FARC to seize control, for the first time, of areas of territory in the South, which was used to produce and transport drugs.

The paramilitaries became a major force in Colombia. Paramilitaries were, at first, private security guards hired by rural landowners to secure their ranches, given the ineffectiveness of the Colombian military. However, paramilitaries began to morph into privately-run armies, engaging in terror tactics just like the military and guerrillas, and predictably, entering into narco-trafficking as well. Widespread allegations of ties between the paramilitaries and the military continue.

By 1998, much of the population seemed to consider the war un-winnable. Sergio Pastrana was elected with promises of winning a peace with the FARC through negotiations. As a bold show of trust, he granted autonomy for a FARC region in the South about the size of Switzerland! Naturally, this move was widely criticized at home and abroad, as the FARC stepped up its arms consolidation and narcotrafficking, and abuses of citizens within the territory became apparent. Moreover, negotiations never really progressed. As a result, Pastrana veered back towards a tough policy, receiving major support from the US under Plan Colombia. The go tough approach has continued under present President Uribe. Uribe is a former regional governor of Antioquia, a Northern province. His father was kidnapped and killed by guerrillas. Uribe's tough plan was supported by the majority of the war-weary population who felt that Pastrana's olive branch initiatives had been betrayed by the FARC. Moreover, the FARC's kidnapping of a reformist female Presidential candidate and the bombing of a Church further hardened the population's general antipathy towards the former Marxists. By now, it became clear the FARC intended to continue its war indefinitely in order to

continue narco-trafficking. Uribe also disarmed the paramilitaries, though there are lingering doubts about the effectiveness of such efforts.

What can be done to break the cycle of violence in Colombia? As in the cases of former war-torn countries in the region such as El Salvador and Nicaragua, the original motivations of the guerrillas in terms of the desire for land reform and economic opportunity, completely understandable, have been overlaid with several other factors and events. There is now a whole generation of guerrillas and paramilitaries who have known no bounds for violence and no constitutional or legal limits on their actions. The youth who are recruited oftentimes from marginal areas as the foot soldiers have little to lose, and if disarmed, neither the government nor any other agent seems likely to be able to provide an adequate living through employment to lifelong soldiers and narcotraffickers. In Colombia in particular, attempts at both cracking down and at offering peace through amnesty and democratic participation have consistently failed. However, these new movements lack in terms of the criteria we have discussed for revolutionary success in C.3: de-legitimization of the existing state apparatus; a restive middle and upper class; charismatic leadership; a well-developed ideology; and generally wide, if tacit support of the population. Indeed, it is not at all clear what the rebels in Colombia or Peru are fighting for, other than control of territory from which to make money, ironically in a capitalist enterprise that devastates the youth and poor of the country. While tenacious and well-trained, these groups have no clear chance at victory, but defeat of them in the rugged territories of both countries seems to be outside the capabilities of the two countries' militaries. Nor does there seem to be any interest on the part of either side in addressing the underlying conditions of poverty and marginalization which were the original inspirations of the 1960s guerrillas. Many of the best and brightest from the affected countries continue to emigrate, and the economies of the Andean region continue to stagnate. Finally, the US's new finding that the Colombian civil war is now part of the war on terrorism has not led to the massive resources that would finally win the day for the Colombian military. Instead, paramilitary groups have been accused of both drug-trafficking and human rights violations, with the tacit collusion of parts of the Colombian military. The fact is that as long as there is viable revenue from a drug trade, with demand factors completely out of the control of Colombians, cartels, guerrillas, and paramilitaries (as well as some parts of the military itself) will continue to have the means to operate through violence and corruption. In a sense, the middle and upper-class drug users of the North are fueling the ongoing conflict in Colombia, as much as any of the other direct participants.

Promoting a Better Situation for Latin America and U.S. Foreign Policy

We can wring our hands at the negative effects of U.S. interventions in Latin America endlessly, but at the end of the day, only a proper analysis can give us a chance to attempt to improve it. If we are truly honest, we see that the problems related to the US are problems that could be applied to different degrees to every state's foreign policy, from Russia to Canada. We have so far seen in our historical analysis that the U.S., like every other state, has largely pursued two main interests in the region: military and economic. In the colonial and neo-imperial period, these two interests were linked, so that the U.S. pursued economic gains through military actions. In line with modern

international relations theories, U.S. interests after World War II have been guided first and foremost by its perceptions of security threats. Therefore, we have seen that in periods of heightened security threats, the U.S. has openly intervened, often with military force, to fight Communism, or, more recently narco-trafficking guerrillas. Where the threat perception is diminished, as in the late 1970s and late 1980s up to the present, the main pursuit has been economic in nature. In brief periods, nonetheless, during the Good Neighbor era, under the Alliance for Progress, the Carter Administration, and briefly under Clinton, more enlightened interests that benefit Latin American economic and political development and human rights have been pursued. These periods seem to have occurred when the threat perception from the region was diminished, and when the internal decision-makers themselves had a wider perception.

This brings us to how we could influence U.S. foreign policy to increasingly include these more enlightened view of U.S. interests. U.S. foreign policy has always been dominated by the Executive, but the Carter and Clinton Administration periods show that non-governmental organizations can have a significant impact on policy, if they have allies within the Administration. Note that these were also periods of relative peace for the US, when hard core realism could be assuaged by moderate domestic elements. Under Carter, a variety of human rights groups, including the Washington Office on Latin America, were able to relay important information and fact-finding that aided the pursuit of human rights. Under Clinton, the pressure of environmental and labor groups led to side-agreements to the NAFTA Treaty. To be sure, these are minor achievements in the context of U.S. foreign policy, but they give hope that a wider evolution is possible. Activists for a more enlightened policy need to make the case for it on the basis not of principles, but of enlightened self-interest by the U.S. Despite its internal ideals, U.S. foreign policy has only haphazardly reflected principled stances on democratization and human rights. In demonstrating that economic development can reduce migration pressures and expand middle-class markets, for example, a case can be made for poverty reduction assistance. By demonstrating that human rights protections and democratization lead to well-functioning institutions that reduce threats to U.S. security and property, and increase stability in the region, a case can also be made that appeals directly to U.S. foreign policy. Such appeals are insufficient absent internal reforms by Latin Americans, but in the context of our analysis, they are the only effective means of appeal to change the damaging aspects of US policies.

However, international relations theories also tell us that it is the interactions of states that creates the dynamics of a relationship. To be sure, our first perception is that any relationship between the U.S. and Latin American states is bound to be one-sided. The U.S. has an economic and military size that vastly overwhelms their capabilities. However, we have also seen that there are selected times, such as the nationalizations of oil in Mexico and Venezuela, of copper in Chile, and of industrial aid during World War II, when Latin American nations have successfully acted against U.S. interests. The Cuban Revolution alone punctures the myth of U.S. invincibility and omnipresence in the region. Besides that, the divided nature of U.S. foreign policy decision-making within each Administration, e.g. Carter, opens the way for alliances between Latin American interests and domestic counterparts. From a realist standpoint, Latin American nations

need to assure the U.S. that there is a minimal security threat. Thus, if Castro wanted better relations with the U.S., he would reduce the bellicosity of his anti-American statements. Realistically, the small island of Cuba should be relatively minor in importance to U.S. foreign policy interests, and however, a change presumes that a relationship with the U.S. is important to Castro. In fact, he legitimizes his dictatorship on the U.S. threat, so he is unlikely to do so.

Therefore, we have to see the counterparts to U.S. foreign policy, namely Latin American foreign policy. Unfortunately, Latin American nations have rarely pursued their interests in a clear or coherent strategy with the U.S. Internal divisions of Latin American society have opened up nations to much greater intervention from the U.S., through pursuit of common interests with the economic elite and the military, and led to a political blame game of passing the buck solely to imperialism or dependency. For example, Latin American states have a very weak capacity to tax. The capital flight of many of Latin America's rich classes, by many estimates, far exceeds the amount that they borrow from abroad. Therefore, a big part of Latin America's vulnerability comes from a lack of national unity and strategic vision. The evidence for this hypothesis can be given by comparing states with relatively independent foreign policies and greater insulation from American interests with those who have seen greater military and economic interventions. The contrast of Brazil, Chile recently, and Costa Rica is remarkable compared with that of Mexico, Colombia, and Panama. The fact that tiny Cuba can resist U.S. pressure is proof paramount that the degree of independence from U.S. pressures depends on internal unity as much as size or location. Robert Pastor points to Omar Torrijos' successful pressure on the U.S. to hand over control of the Panama Canal to show that Latin Americans can succeed in achieving a more enlightened U.S. foreign policy that is in the mutual interests of both parties.

Besides the solution of improving internal coherence for better foreign policy, international relations theories suggest a few other avenues for improvement from a Latin American perspective. From Latin America's point of view, the main aims have always been economic in nature, including everything from aid to greater access to the U.S. market. To a lesser extent, Latin America has also sought to reduce U.S. military interventions in the region. In the past, Cuba and other Latin American countries could play off the rivalry between the U.S. and Europe and later between the U.S. and the Soviet Union to gain bargaining power, e.g. Vargas' steel mill during World War II, or USAID agricultural reform programs in the region. With the end of the Cold War, Latin American countries may ironically suffer from less bargaining power, and so greater neglect in an economic sense.

Therefore, Latin America should think of new strategies for maximizing its bargaining power. From the point of view of these theories, an alliance of Latin American states independent of the U.S. would greatly enhance their bargaining position with the U.S. The MERCOSUR (Common Market of the South) provides just such a vehicle for the Southern Cone countries in their negotiations on an FTAA. Similarly, the Contadora group of Latin American countries had some success in pursuing Central American civil peace agreements that helped to reduce U.S. influence. In terms of

multinational corporations, Latin American countries could create national champions as Korea has with Samsung, and the U.S. with General Motors earlier, or even promote alliances with other Latin American companies, that could compete head on with U.S., European, and Japanese multinationals. A second interesting strategy would be to find non-U.S. allies from outside the region to both diversify sources of economic growth and to increase bargaining power with the U.S. Thus, Chile's recent free trade agreement with the European Union and S. Korea gives it a much improved position in future free trade negotiations. Similarly, third party non-governmental organizations can play a helpful role. European and U.S. private funding of the Zapatistas has been key to their success. Amnesty International has had success in putting pressure on governments for human rights abuses. Non-governmental organizations have also been attempting to organize civil society groups to push for more concessions from their governments. A third basic strategy would be to improve national and regional institutions. To the extent that institutions are smoother functioning, the internal formation of a bargaining position will be easier to achieve and consolidate. When national interests are fragmented, the U.S. will have an easier time finding domestic allies, another strategy that Latin Americans can also pursue. Moreover, using international organizations, such as the Organization of American States, can reduce the sting of U.S. intervention while still allowing for helpful interventions, such as election monitoring, by the international community.

Moreover, activists from within the United States can also unite with like-minded Latin Americans to create greater internal pressure for a more humanitarian foreign policy. In order to move in this direction, it is first of all important to carefully consider the decision-making points of the US foreign policy system. As explained in Graham Allison's classic work on the Cuban Missile Crisis (see bibliography), US foreign policy is anything but monolithic- it is highly fragmented and therefore susceptible to pressures most of the time. The President as the Commander-in-Chief, is immediately responsive to his closest advisors. While the importance of particular advisors naturally changes by Administration, the National Security Advisor, the Defense Secretary, and the Secretary of State are often the closest advisors to the President. These Secretaries work through a vast bureaucracy of operational and intelligence bureaus that carry out the President's foreign policy aims. The President is not only responsive to their advice, but also to the budgetary and oversight pressures of the Congress. The level of Congressional involvement in foreign policy has increased since the end of the Viet Nam War. Important hearings on the CIA's involvement in the Chile coup and in the Iran contra scandal are just 2 examples of where Congressional investigations have held US Administrations accountable and changed foreign policy. Both the President and the Congress work within the Washington "bubble," an intense locus of continual conversation among experts and lobbyists within the bureaucracy, think tanks, activist non-governmental organizations, the media, and corporate and business lobby associations. Particular experts who are able to understand the "rules of the game," such as Fouad Ajami of Johns Hopkins University, can achieve disproportionate weight in terms of the credibility of their analysis. Frequent appearances on insider media outlets such as *The Jim Lehrer Newshour*, *Charlie Rose*, and *Nightline*, signal a person with a strong influence on the policy apparatus. Lobbying groups such as AIPAC, the pro-Israel

lobby, also point to the ability of those who understand Washington to sway foreign policy. No comparable Arab lobby exists. Last but not least, the direct pressure of particular citizens, on rare occasion in mass demonstrations as during the Viet Nam War, and more frequently working together as a voting bloc, as in the case of pro-Israel and anti-Castro Miami Cubans, can push the President and the Congress to extraordinary lengths to create foreign policies acceptable to these well-organized groups. While most activists often have the initial reaction of not wanting to be involved in what they view as a corrupt system, all progressive legislation, including environmental and civil rights advances, has come through a combination of mounting outsider-insider efforts.

Perhaps the most important element of all in terms of regional autonomy from outside domination is one which does not fall directly into the category of international relations- that is relative consensus on a domestic level. As we shall see in the next chapter, the fragmentation of Latin America, along ethnic, class, and regional, among other lines, vastly increases its vulnerability as outside forces, such as multinational corporations. The instability of politics and of economic development seem to go hand-in-hand and reflect the severe divisions within Latin America itself, which helps to explain the seemingly passive, reactive, and victimized view Latin America has of its relationship with the U.S. Unable to act in a long-term fashion, reach consensus, or arrive at a unified coalition, pressures on the international and domestic levels build into the revolutionary and anti-imperialist movements in Latin America which we have discussed. Indeed, it is the relative internal unity of Cuba and Costa Rica that probably is the most important factor in their long-term stability and success. We turn in the next 3 chapters to a closer examination of these domestic pressures- political, economic, and social.

Keywords: international relations; GATS; WTO; realism; neo-liberalism; collective action; imperialism; dependency; neo-imperialism; Cold War; leveraging; integration; Panama Canal treaty; paramilitary

Discussion Questions:

- Why have there been so few interstate wars in Latin America?
- What are the priorities of most countries' foreign policies? Do the same priorities hold for Canada? What can be done to make human rights a more important agenda item? -If you were advising an ngo concerned with Latin America about how to influence US and Canadian foreign Policy, what would you suggest?
- Why did leftist guerrillas turn to narco-trafficking? What effect do you think this has on their ability to pursue their cause?

Suggested Exercises

I find simulation exercises of crises situations, such as the situation in Venezuela, to be helpful in getting students to empathize with all the different actors' points of view. Similarly, contrasting strategies that Latin American countries have pursued, such as Torrijos and the Panama Canal, can reduce the one-sided and hopeless views that many students have towards U.S. foreign policy. Walking students through the U.S. foreign

policy process, especially with a specific example in mind, can be especially helpful if they are open-minded. I also often have students practice applying the different international relations paradigms to actual situations. This helps the students to learn the perspectives, and, more importantly, how to apply them to particular situations. Looking at Latin American foreign policies' towards each other is also important. Finally, it is helpful to note the differences in both external influence and internal reaction across countries. By comparing Costa Rica with her neighbors, and/or Cuba with her neighbors, the point of internal fragmentation opening the way for greater outside influence can be made well.

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