

Latin america and the cold war assignment

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During the different periods of the Cold War, the United States intervened in Latin American domestic affairs both directly through their own military and indirectly through CIA trained proxy forces to safeguard their assets and contain communism. Significantly with the Eisenhower Administration of whom initiated the overthrow of the reformist Guatemalan government in 1952 and ending with Reagan who centered his policies on the overthrow of Sandiness in Nicaragua. The Cold War period furthermore appeared to be a period where the U.

S. Paired with intervention, also attempted to provide an increased amount of economic aid ND concessions to Latin American countries as incentives to avoid the communism, for the Alliance for Progress by Kennedy in 1961 which although many of the agreements lead to failure, it still marked a change in U. S. - Latin American relations. Undoubtedly the growth of communism, the Soviet Union influence and ideological dispute served to change the way in which the U. S acted towards Latin America.

However, there are strong continuations with U. S. - Latin American relations, which remain constant before, throughout and after the Cold War most importantly the sovereignty over the area and he protection of U. S interests regarding economy and security. Where the Cold War brought about the most significant change in U. S policy towards Latin America was in its increased priority in blocking communist expansion in its own hemisphere. F-room the end of the 1 9405 toward the end of the 1 sass, this priority meant an acute increase in U.

US interventionism either covertly or overtly to prevent the spread of communism. The USA had this call for ideological security in the region that took precedence in its policy and in frequent cases reaching the aggressive extremes of supporting harsh- nine right wing dictators preventing not only the spread of communism but also democracy. This in itself acts of proof that the battle against communism was more important than that of installing democracy.

As the US emerged as one of the new world hegemonic powers post-WI, Roosevelt's Good Neighbor policy of non-intervention or interference in Latin American domestic affairs had moved towards a more military foreign policy at the dawn of the Cold War exhibited greatly by the propositions made at the 1947 Rio de Janeiro Conference to create a more defensively united American bloc via the Inter- American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance.

George Kennan bluntly stated in a 35-page report on his tour of Latin America, that the area would be too weak to overcome communist power and that it was vital to keep it in US spheres of influence. Moscow would try' and harness the already existing anti-American feelings to eliminate US influence in the zone. This report included demands that the US should provide incentives at all costs to resist communism including more severe measures of repression; " In general, therefore, it would be wise for us to avoid putting direct pressure on

Latin American governments with respect to communist activities, except where those activities have some highly direct and offensive relationship to American interests. Where this is not the case, we must resort to

indirection". (Keenan, 1950, p. 182) For Keenan, if the US policy did not adapt to intervene in Latin American affairs in the name of containing communism, it could cause " global embarrassment" (Keenan, 1950, p. 183) for the United States as the global power.

The Eisenhower administration firmly believed that the soviet and communist expansion was more achieved through the works of unionism parties and communist trade unions outside the Eastern bloc and the exploitation of revolutions and civil wars in developing countries (Bowie & Merman, 1998 p. 54), for the USA this was the biggest threat in Latin America where weaker governments (as Keenan had already expressed) could be exploited. This campaign gained more legitimacy following the Cuban revolution that underlined for the U.

S government that ideology had to become the first priority. Johnson ' s decision to overtly invade the Dominican Republic in 1965 was made in avoidance of a second Cuba. Later on, Reagan sold arms to the anti-Sandiest Contacts group putting the president under risk of impeachment and thus highlights how important the ideological argument was in U. S policy in Latin America (Dominique, 1999). The protection of an inter-American system where the USA would hold hegemonic power from communist influence became the principal objective of U. S. Look-alikes. There are two key examples who ICC illustrate the precedence of ideology over other factors in policy during the Cold War; Firstly the differences in U. S. Actions over Guatemala in 1954 and Bolivia in 1953. Both countries assumed, nationalist reformist governments that wanted to expropriate international export industries and impose agrarian reforms. The urban middle class and workers

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supported them both and both derived parts of their ideology from Marxism. However, in Guatemala, the CIA covertly overthrew Arbenz's government.

In Bolivia, the issue was settled with the U. S. Sending economic aid to Paz's regime, which stabilized the new government. Why, did they receive such opposite responses from the US? The Guatemalan government had been accused by the Eisenhower administration of communist infiltration. Most importantly as a threat to the U. S. There was the existence of communists in the agencies for the implementation of Agrarian reforms (Blaser, 1985 Pl 56) which meant potential communist seizure of former U. S. Owned land.

The Paz government in Bolivia understood that the USA were a vital customer for their tin mining industry and therefore presented themselves as a much more moderate government with regard for the inter-American policy such as maintaining a respect for foreign investment. A nationalization of the tin industry would pave the way for foreign investment that had previously been blocked by closed oligarchic economy. The assurance by the MR. that Bolivia would not turn communist led the CIA to approach the situation in the opposite to way in which it had done with Arbenz in Guatemala.

The active disassembling and eventual CIA-backed overthrow of Allende's Chile went forward because of the Chilean president's policy of the via Chilean socialism and the uncompensated expropriation of U. S firms in Chile. The U. S intervened because of the potential communist path Allende could take, even though Chile had no relations with the USSR. At the same period, 1972, Juan Velasco the Peruvian president bought 250 T-55

Tanks from the USSR whom with they shared a military relationship (Dominique, 1 999, p. 10).

Moreover, it too, had expropriated various US businesses with little compensation. However, unlike in Chile and notwithstanding the fact that Peru proved more threatening to American interests, the compensation disputes were settled diplomatically as Peru provoked no ideological fears of communism. Dominique states “ when the ideological fear of communism was absent, the United States did to deploy its military forces nor seek to overthrow Latin American governments that expropriated U. S. Firms”. (Dominique, 1999 PI 1).

The growth of communism in the world did make a significant change to U. S. Latin American relations. The CICS waged war on communism to consolidate itself as a world power. The distinctive emergence of ideology as the key driver in U. S policies was brought about by the Cold War, however, the interventionism of the United States was something that had been embedded in Latin American- U. S. Relations before the Cold War and the intervention did not disappear in post- AR. Interventionism was part of the hemispheric security policy that the U. S. Ought to maintain over the region protecting U. S. Economic, ideological and hegemonic interests The United States has always had a strategic interest in the area from the Monroe Doctrine in 1 823 in the aim to keep the region out of European control. Furthermore the Plant Amendment that allowed for 33 years, the USA to have interventionist power in Cuba. In this significance, the Cold War can be seen simply as another problem to be overcome in the United State’s control

over the area, to exclude extra-hemispheric rivals and to just in ideological battle.

Evidently during the Cold War period, U. S forces intervened in Latin American domestic affairs in the name of communist containment however it was just as much to secure U. S assets. To take a simplistic example; in 1961 the CIA plotted to overthrow the communist Castro in Cuba in their pledge to destroy communism, yet in the same year they also plotted to overthrow the highly anti-communist Trujillo in the Dominican Republic which the CICS had previously had good relations. Trujillo towards the end of his career had moved apart this relationship and now roved inimical to interests.

This contradictory use of intervention highlights more in depth motives for U. S. Policy, which coincide more with past interventions for example the Panama Revolution of 1903 was greatly linked to the Big Stick policy of Roosevelt administration. The construction of the Panama Canal itself was of vital necessity for the USA in terms of economic issues and security.

Returning to the case of Guatemala 1954, especially when compared to the Bolivian case, it was easily seen as part of the U. S Cold War foreign policy to defend against communism. However with

Guatemala, it was the defense of economic interest similar to past interventions that made the U. S. React in the way it did. In the work *Bitter Fruit* Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinder suggest a more plausible argument stressing the importance of the expropriation of the United Fruit Company in the decision to overthrow the Guatemalan government as

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opposed to their link with spreading communism in the region. The total U. S investment in the country totaled 50 million; the company monopolized the banana exports, transport and communication networks (Schlesinger & Kinder, 1 999 IPPP).

Arbiter's reforms included building a highway and an electric power plant as well as expropriating U. S. Land, companies would also have to start paying export duties. Guatemala had been chosen by United Fruit because as Thomas McCann a former worker stated; " Guatemalan government was the weakest most corrupt and most pliable" (Schlesinger & Kinder, PI 51). The company had huge American political links, Eisenhower own personal secretary wanted an executive job within the company and UN ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge was a large stockholder.

These reasons appear more reasonable for explaining why the U. S. Intervened as there was little evidence of any real communist activity in the country or relationships with the USSR. In the post Cold War period, domestic issues such as Drug Trafficking and immigration took precedence as the threat of Soviet expansion disappeared. There intervention was replaced by more coercive policies. One factor for this was the decline of economic value in Latin America. In 1965, Latin America represented 19. 1% of IIS direct investment abroad, in 1 985 it had reduced to 12. 7%, 17. % of US purchases in 1 965 came from Latin America, in 1985 only 12. % (Falloff IPPP). The absence of a rival superpower allowed the United States to relax hemispherical security measures and intervention became more sporadic, dealing again with domestic issues like Silicon's decision to invade Haiti in 1 994 to attempt to control the flow of Haitian immigrants into the United

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States seeking asylum from civil war. The movement towards more coercive diplomacy and more selective intervention was a response to the changes in world order following the end of the Cold War.

In conclusion, U. S. - Latin American relations did change during the Cold War. The majority of cases where the United States intervened were on ideological grounds. It was also the first time that the US had to compete with a rival superpower with opposite ideological belief and a potential threat to their hegemonic security of the western hemisphere. With the decline of communism, there was also a decline in intervention due to an absence of ideological struggle and Latin American-U. S. Relations returned to domestic issues such as mortification.