Security at any Cost

Author: Dean Gudicello

Persistent link: http://hdl.handle.net/2345/461

This work is posted on eScholarship@BC, Boston College University Libraries.

Boston College Electronic Thesis or Dissertation, 2004

Copyright is held by the author, with all rights reserved, unless otherwise noted.
Security at any Cost

The United States and Latin America in the 20th Century

By Dean Gudicello

4/30/04

Advised by Professor Jennie Purnell, Political Science Department
Throughout the 20th century, the United States has been heavily involved in the internal affairs of its Latin American neighbors. For a hundred years we have made their problems our problems and vice versa. There are many explanations as to why this relationship exists. Some see American policy motivated by a racist paternalism towards the South. Some see the hand of private capitalist interests guiding our policy. Some see a noble attempt to bring democracy to troubled and oppressed peoples. Finally, some see American policy motivated primarily by security concerns and the Monroe Doctrine, that is the belief that the United States should prevent powers from outside the Western Hemisphere from taking control over Latin American nations. I believe that the final rationale best explains our intense, but somewhat sporadic, fixation on Latin America.

This paper will argue that American interventionism in Latin America has been motivated by security concerns and a desire to keep extra-hemispheric actors out of the Western Hemisphere. According to this hypothesis, the United States will primarily take interest in a Latin American nation when it is vulnerable to outside intervention. The main response of the United States will be to stabilize the situation and to make the nation strong enough to resist, or remove the need for, intervention by other actors. In this case stability, not democracy or economics, is the key. It would be expected that the United States would be unconcerned about democracy or freedom in Latin America and would be willing to undermine these principles in the name of security. It would also be expected that interventions would not be spread out evenly over time, but instead concentrated around periods when an extra-hemispheric powers take an interest in Latin America or in a period of heightened world tension.

The second explanation is that American interventionism has been motivated by a
desire to defend American capital and business interests in Latin America. This is the Marxist explanation, one of public force in the service of private capital. In this case it would be expected that the United States would intervene to overthrow governments that were economically nationalist and resistant to influence from Wall Street and replace them with puppets. The main purpose of the government would be to follow the interests of U.S. corporations and work to ensure profits for them. It would be expected that interventions would be evenly spread out through the 20th century and not concentrated during periods of world tension, since the fear of extra-hemispheric powers intervening would be merely a smokescreen for U.S. actions. It would also be expected of course that American corporations and Wall Street would be happy with U.S actions during this period.

The third explanation is that American interventionism has been motivated by a desire to spread the “gospel of democracy” throughout Latin America. According to this hypothesis, the United States intervenes to overthrow dictatorships and replaces them with liberal democratic regimes. It would be expected that America wouldn’t attempt to undermine democratic institutions such as free elections or a free press for the sake of stability or economic profit. Interventions would be concentrated at first to remove any existing dictatorships then spread out to overthrow dictatorships as they appear. It would be expected that the United States would not form alliances with authoritarian regimes and in no way would the United States move against a democratic nation.

In order to test these hypotheses I will examine several cases of American intervention that demonstrate a desire to seriously affect the internal workings of a Latin American nation. I will look only at interventions that were intended either to overthrow
an existing government, protect a existing government that was on the verge of collapse, or an intervention by which the United States took over some vital government function thereby impugning the sovereignty of that nation. I will not consider minor interventions that involve only a small number of U.S. personnel that could not have affected that inner workings of another nation. In this way I will exclude the many interventions that lasted only a few days and were only sent to defend American lives temporally. I will also exclude the actions of American corporations and individuals unless these actions were undertaken with the assistance of the federal government, or at the request of the federal government. This is because actions undertaken by rogue agents cannot seriously be considered policies undertaken by the American government and should not be examined as such.

So what security concerns would the United States face with regards to Latin America? Although idea of foreign powers using Central America as a base to invade the United States via Mexico might make for interesting cinema, however it is not a realistic scenario. Central America’s importance to the United States comes from its proximity to the Panama Canal. There was a fear that enemies in Central America would go south and seize the canal, rather than move north.

The importance of Caribbean is a little more complicated. Aside from defending the approaches to the canal, other concerns worried U.S. policymakers. In the 19th century and the very early 20th century there were concerns that a European power could use Caribbean as a staging ground to attack the Atlantic Coast or blockade our ports. As the 20th century progressed and America’s navy became stronger different concerns arose. America became concerned about defending its sea lines of communications with
Western Europe. Even with the Caribbean under American control, German U-Boats were still able to menace convoys to Britain during the World Wars.

In the Cold War the problem only increased. Besides needing to maintain control over the Caribbean, South America below the Amazon River became a concern. Germany had established a colony in Brazil during the Imperial Era and while this did not please the United States nothing was done about it. Now, with fear of the “domino effect” of communism, any penetration by the so-called foreign ideology might quickly spread throughout the hemisphere.

This paper is divided between two eras, What historian Peter Smith calls the Imperial Era of 1900 to 1933 and the Cold War Era from 1945 to 1992. At the start of each there will be a brief introduction and examination of the times in order to put American interventions in the proper perspective. The Imperial Era will start with an examination of American-German antagonism at the start of the century over Latin America. It will show how the German naval buildup, Kaiser Wilhelm’s speeches, and the Venezuelan blockade influenced the creation of interventionist policies with regards to Latin America. The Venezuelan blockade is a particularly important case since it involved the first major action by Europeans against a Latin American nation due to financial problems and ultimately led to the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, in which the United States would pursue a policy designed to preempt any future actions by the Europeans in the Western Hemisphere.

For case studies of American intervention, this paper will examine intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1905, Cuba in 1906, Nicaragua in 1912 and 1925, and Haiti in 1914. In each of these cases there was a massive U.S. intervention in which the American
government attempted to keep a regime in power or to take over sovereign powers of a regime.

In 1905, it was clear that the Dominican debt default was going to draw intervention by Europe the same way that the Venezuelan default did three years earlier. This represents a good case of U.S. preemption of extra-hemispheric forces. It also represents a good case of the United States going against corporate interests as the relevant American company involved protested the intervention at first and the intervention in no way gave preference to this company. The two Nicaraguan interventions show how America ignored the crisis until it was clear that no sort of order could be preserved that could guarantee the safety of foreigners living in the country. It is worth noting that American intervention cleared the way for an economic nationalist to take power. Cuba and Haiti show how the United States intervened when faced with the prospect of anarchy in each of those nations after their governments collapsed. In Cuba, fiscal stability and solvency was given preference over the possibility of profits for American companies.

However, in all of these cases, the United States stunted democracy in order to achieve stability. In Nicaragua, the conservatives were kept in power even though a majority of the country was liberal. In Cuba, conservatives committed frequent election fraud, driving the liberals to revolt. However, freedom and democracy were secondary issues in each American intervention during this era.

The second part of the paper will start by explaining the transition from the Good Neighbor policy to the Cold War. It will look at the causes of America’s fear of Communist expansion into the Western Hemisphere, starting with the breakdown of the
wartime alliance between the Soviet Union and the United States. It will show how the coup in Czechoslovakia and the Korean War shaped U.S. perceptions of the Communist threat. It will then focus on the cases studies of Guatemala in 1954, Cuba in 1961, the Dominican Republic in 1965, Chile in 1973, Central America in the 1980s, and Grenada in 1983.

In 1954, paranoia over Communist expansion was running at a fever pitch, and led America to overthrow the democratic government of Guatemala after previously tolerating years of economic reforms. In 1961, an exile invasion was launched to overthrow Castro in Cuba when the United States felt he was becoming too close to the Soviet Union. In 1965, the U.S. sent over 20,000 troops to the Dominican Republic to prevent the former president from retaking control of his country because he had support from the communists and the U.S. would not tolerate another Cuba. In 1973, the U.S. assisted and gave political support to a military coup against a democratically elected president because he was also a Marxist. In the 1980s America supported a brutal military regime in El Salvador because it was threatened by a communist guerrilla force, supported by Cuba, and tried to overthrow a left-wing regime in Nicaragua that also supported the rebels with arms shipments. Finally in 1983, the U.S. took advantage of chaos on the island of Grenada to rollback a Soviet-aligned state in the Western Hemisphere.

Understanding the historical background to American policy choices is crucial to understanding current policies and predicting future ones. If economics drives intervention then we can expect more interventions in the future as American investment increases due to globalization. However, if security drives intervention then we could
expect very little government interest in Latin America as long as the United States holds a commanding lead over any other potential competitors. Without a foreign power to be concerned about American policy would be aimless and drifting, following no consistent pattern.
Part One: The Informal Empire

1900-1933
At the end of the 19th century most of Latin America had been free from European colonization for about 100 years. Since 1823, the United States had declared that the hemisphere was off limits to further colonization and exploitation by the Europeans, but for the most part the United States did not have the ability to back up this claim. However, since Africa and Asia presented themselves as targets for imperialism throughout the 1800s this wasn’t really a problem. Except for the brief occupation of Mexico in the 1860s, the Monroe Doctrine was generally accepted by Europe.

However, by the end of the century the rise of both America and Germany to great power status would make U.S. policy in the region much different in the 20th century than it had been in the 19th. Germany had been mostly shut out of expansion into Africa and Asia. Given the Kaiser’s desire for a German empire, America began to fear that he would pursue expansion into the Western Hemisphere. These fears were compounded by the Anglo-German blockade of Venezuela in 1902 and by various German statements about their intentions for Latin America. The American reaction was to drastically change our Latin American policy, increase spending for the navy and to follow what was called the Roosevelt Corollary to prevent any future "Venezuelas". This Corollary would be the prime policy of the United States until the 1930s, when the absence of foreign interests in Latin America combined with a general state of stability in the region permitted the switch to a non-interventionist “Good Neighbor” policy.
American Policy in the 19th Century

Peter Smith cites two main motivations for imperialism, “To gain access to economic benefits…land, labor, and minerals; and second, to increase political strength and military capability.”¹ American policy was mainly driven by the second consideration, increasing American power and denying power to others. As early as the beginning of the 19th century, the basis of U.S. policy was set, powerful extra-hemispheric actors would not be allowed to gain and exploit footholds in Latin America. American policy was to encourage independence for Latin America, to tolerate a Spanish presence in the form of its colonies in Cuba and Puerto Rico, and to resist any attempts by Britain and France to move in at the expense of independent republics or Spain.² American policy was dictated by the fact that Spain presented no threat to the United States, so its control would not threaten the interests of the United States. However, a more powerful nation, such as Britain, France or later Germany and the Soviet Union would.

On the North American continent, the American government was ready to use force to take control of vast tracts of land in what would become the modern United States, nearly coming to blows with France over New Orleans and outright seizing the Southwest from Mexico.³ However, after 1850, the United States stopped its military expansion, but still sought influence in the hemisphere. Although some in the government flirted with the idea of annexing Cuba, this was never officially endorsed by the government. Instead, America would embrace what would be called the “no-transfer

² Ibid., 17.
principle.” This stated that the U.S. would not tolerate Spain ceding any part of its Latin American Empire, specifically Cuba, to any other European power, e.g. Britain and France.  

By 1898 however, Spain’s weakness became a liability rather than an asset for American policymakers. On February 24, 1895, Cuban nationalists started their revolution against Spain. Later, they released a manifesto demanding full independence (Cuba Libre) rather than just autonomy within a Spanish Empire. Spain sent over 100,000 troops to crush the rebels, but instead found that the rebellion was more powerful than they anticipated. The war escalated and the total number of Spanish troops increased to 200,000 by 1897. Still, Madrid was unable to achieve victory.  

Up until this point America had been neutral in the conflict and had offered to mediate a settlement to the war. President William McKinley had no love for war, but saw that if the current state of affairs continued Cuba would be utterly ruined. If Spain did manage to win, she would probably be too weakened to fight resist any other power which wanted Cuba, and if the Cubans won, they would also be in no position to enforce their own independent. The destruction of the USS Maine on February 15, 1898 provided the cause for war which was declared two months later. With the Spanish-American War, Spain lost the rest of her empire, including not only Cuba, but Puerto Rico and the Philippines as well.  

Washington wanted a canal in Panama and it wanted it to be under U.S. control.

---

3 Ibid., 19-22.  
4 Ibid., 25.  
6 Ibid., 31-47.
Without the Panama Canal, America would be unable to properly defend both its coasts, since if ships were forced to sail around South America, Western Europe would be closer to the Pacific Coast than the U.S. Atlantic Coast was. A European fleet could actually beat the American fleet to California.\(^7\) Since American strategists considered this canal vital, control over Cuba would also be vital, and since Spain seemed too weak to hold it, America would seize it first. American policymakers plainly stated that the need for Cuba comes from a need to protect and control the future canal.\(^8\)

However, securing the canal route would also involve direct U.S. intervention on the isthmus. Colombia had fallen into civil war in 1899, and American policymakers were still debating whether to build the canal in Panama or Nicaragua.\(^9\) Panama seemed to be the better site, but political instability in the area worried Washington. During the civil war, rebel forces attacked the rail line in the peninsula, which drew American intervention in 1902.\(^10\) Meanwhile, negotiations between the United States and Colombia over the future canal were collapsing. The Panamanian nationalists were furious over the failure of Bogotá to accommodate Washington.\(^11\) Up to this point they had feared rebelling against Bogotá due to concerns over American intervention, but when it became clear that they had a common interest in building the canal with Washington, they took their chance.\(^12\)

10 Ibid., 201.
11 Ibid., 246.
12 Ibid., 237.
Washington, who was overjoyed that the valuable isthmus could be separated from the chronically unstable Colombia.  

_America and Germany at the turn of the Century_

After the Spanish-American War, U.S. policymakers began to worry about the possibility of Germany seeking bases or territory in the Western Hemisphere. Kaiser Wilhelm II had expressed his desire for expansion into Latin America, noting that, “we [Germany] must be the paramount power there [Latin America].” He also declared to King Edward VII of England that, “German naval construction is directed not against England, but America.” In addition, Germany, unlike other European powers such as the United Kingdom, explicitly rejected the Monroe Doctrine. Now, whether or not one takes these statements at face value, it must be noted that they had a profound effect on how American leaders viewed Germany. After the Germans continued their naval buildup by passing the Second Navy Bill in 1900, Secretary of War Elihu Root (who was to play a major role in American interventions in the Caribbean over the next several years) made a speech that predicted America would soon have to fight to uphold the Monroe Doctrine in order to keep Europe, and Germany in particular, from expanding further into Latin America.

Many American leaders were skeptical that they could win a naval war against Germany as it was generally accepted that the German fleet was stronger than the U.S.

---

13 Smith, P., 35.
15 Ibid., 75.
Navy. The one trump card the United States had was that in the event of a war in the Caribbean the U.S. enjoyed a distinct geographical advantage. American naval bases were of course much closer to the expected war zone than German ones. The German war plan stated that a war would be fought somewhere in the Western Atlantic, near the Eastern Seaboard of the United States. The American counter-plan, code named “War Plan Black”, also anticipated a fight near the American coast.

Both plans assumed U.S. control of the Caribbean, but also factored in a German takeover of an island base. For the Germans, seizing a base in the Caribbean would be crucial for any wintertime operations. Starting in 1898, German naval planners had begun searching for potential sites for a German Caribbean base, favoring the acquisition of Dutch possessions in the region. It is clear that a German presence in the Caribbean or elsewhere in Central America would tip the scales in favor of Germany in case of war. As a result, it became America’s policy to resist any such incursion into Latin America. Root would later claim that an American fear of Germany led to the government’s inclusion of the Platt Amendment into the Cuban constitution. No outright attempts were ever made by Germany to seize a base in Latin America. However, events in Venezuela convinced the American government that there might be indirect ways for the Europeans to gain a foothold in the Caribbean.

It is worth noting that of the thirty military interventions undertaken by the United

17 Mitchell, 42.
18 Herwig, 52
19 Mitchell, 55.
20 Herwig, 53.
21 Ibid., 70.
22 Munro, Dana G., Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy in the Caribbean 1900-1921
States in Latin America between 1898 and 1938, twenty two were launched in the first twenty years (1898-1918, the period before the defeat of Imperial Germany) and only eight launched in the next twenty. An American intervention was almost three times as likely before the end of Imperial Germany then after, at least until the start of the Cold War. In addition, all but one of the major interventions discussed in this section took place in those first twenty years.23

Venezuela 1902-03

In 1901 Venezuela defaulted on its loans to various nations in Europe, primarily Germany, Italy, and Great Britain.24 This default led to an Anglo-German blockade and virtual state of war with Venezuela. This action and fear of its repetition would dominate the United States’ Latin America policy for the next twenty years. By the end of this crisis, Congress would approve the construction five new battleships to strengthen the U.S. Navy.25 This was not a one time buildup. Increased naval construction continued over the opposition of not only anti-imperialists and pacifists, but of the Wall Street establishment as well, as America tried to match the German Navy.26 It was also after the blockade that President Theodore Roosevelt would announce his corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, fundamentally altering the government’s Latin American policy and providing the basis for American intervention in the affairs of the Caribbean nations.

By 1902, Venezuela owed Germany in excess of $12 million for various reasons

---

23 Smith P., 51.
24 Herwig, 76.
25 Ibid., 80.
ranging from investments and loans to damages incurred during a civil war around the turn of the century.\textsuperscript{27} Initially, the U.S. government did not mind a German show of force to collect the debt, as long as Germany guaranteed that it would not try to seize or annex any territory.\textsuperscript{28} However, when the blockade actually began in December 1902, things escalated quickly.

On December 9 the Anglo-German coalition began attacking Venezuelan ships, sinking two. Four days later they attacked forts on the coastline.\textsuperscript{29} After the attacks America began to take notice of the situation. A memo written before the crisis emphasized the possibly of a slow escalation which would pull Germany deeper and deeper in as it sought further compensation for the war, eventually leading to a German occupation of the entire country or at the very least the conversion of Venezuela into a German puppet state.\textsuperscript{30} Now, with Germany openly considering invading Venezuela’s ports and then destroying another fort on January 21, 1903, it seemed that if the situation continued, the quagmire that the memo predicted and the subsequent massive German intervention was inevitable.\textsuperscript{31} The U.S. Navy was deployed to the region to put diplomatic pressure on the Germans and to monitor their activities.\textsuperscript{32} An agreement was reached between all parties on February 14\textsuperscript{th} and the Europeans lifted the blockade.\textsuperscript{33} A final

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 82.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Munro, 67.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 68.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 70.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 106-108.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Munro, 73.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Collin, 117.
\end{itemize}
settlement of all debts was concluded a year later.\textsuperscript{34}

However, the problems were still not solved. The court had decided that the blockading nations should be given “preferential treatment” in the payment of their debts. A State Department official was quoted as saying that the decision put “a premium on violence” when it came to collecting debts from other nations.\textsuperscript{35} In effect, the court was encouraging Europeans to use force to collect debts from an intransigent nation. By rewarding this behavior, it is not unreasonable to expect that Europeans would be more likely to use force in the future. This of course could lead to the scenario of a European state seizing control of a Latin American nation, either intentionally or through a slow process of escalation and reprisal. It would now become the policy of the United States to prevent this from happening by preventing the Europeans from even attempting to collect debts. The U.S. would assume the role of debt collector to make sure no other nation would.

\textit{Dominican Republic 1905-1924}

In 1905 the United States assumed control of customhouses in the Dominican Republic in order to satisfy European creditors and prevent a reoccurrence of the Venezuela crisis of 1902. The United States would remain involved in Dominican politics until 1924, when marines were finally withdrawn. It has been charged that this intervention was undertaken for commercial and corporate reasons, not to preempt European intervention. However, the evidence suggests that security concerns and the

\textsuperscript{34} Munro, 74.  
\textsuperscript{35} Collin, 393.
Monroe Doctrine were indeed behind the intervention. The American government remained aloof from the problems in the Dominican Republic until foreign intervention became almost inevitable. The suggestion that America intervened to protect democracy is also false, as the U.S. had no problem repressing democratic and liberal freedoms in the name of stability.

Before the Venezuela blockade, the United States had expressed disinterest in the financial problems of the Dominican Republic. The San Domingo Improvement Company, a U.S. corporation set up to help modernize the Dominican Republic, only had access to the “good offices” of the State Department during its disputes with the Dominican Government in 1901.36 Secretary of State John Hay also rejected Dominican proposals in 1902 to lease bases in Samaná Bay and reprimanded the American Minister to the Dominican Republic, William Powell, for intervening too actively in the SDIC-Dominican dispute in favor of the Company.37

It seems that if America had not been concerned about Europe becoming involved in the Dominican Republic as it had in Venezuela, American investors would have been left on their own to settle with the Dominican government. Twenty five years earlier, Assistant Secretary of State J.C. Bancroft Davis told Americans that sought to invest abroad that, “The citizen going to a foreign country does so with his eyes open and with full knowledge of the danger…which he incurs.”38 However, international events intruded, and so the United States pursued a policy in the Dominican Republic based on strategic security concerns.

36 Munro, 83.
37 Ibid., 84.
Since about 1900 the Dominican Republic had been having problems with the Europeans. The French had once threatened a blockade over the murder of a French national and other European governments had applied pressure for various reasons from debt collection to protection of citizens living in the country.\(^{39}\) However, as late as 1904 President Roosevelt had expressed a desire to remain somewhat uninvolved stating, “Their government has been bedeviling us to establish some kind of protectorate over the islands, [sic] and take charge of their finances. We have been answering them that we could not possibly go into the subject now at all.”\(^ {40}\) America had no interest in taking over the Dominican Republic in order to expand the territory or reach of the United States. In addition, Roosevelt had no interest in intervening for the sake of the SDIC alone. Had the threat of European intervention been non-existent, it is likely that America would have left the Dominicans to their own devices.

However, a civil war had ravaged the nation and it seemed that it would be impossible for the country to pay its debts.\(^ {41}\) A repeat of Venezuela seemed imminent. France and Belgium made it known that they were considering intervention after the Dominican Republic defaulted on its debts on November 1, 1904. Italy followed suit on December 24, announcing its intentions to intervene.\(^ {42}\) In March an Italian warship arrived in the area to “inquire” about the Italian debts.\(^ {43}\) A few days later the Belgians

---

\(^{38}\) Collin, 353.
\(^{39}\) Munro, 87-88.
\(^{40}\) Ibid., 91.
\(^{41}\) Ibid., 95.
\(^{42}\) Ibid., 98.
\(^{43}\) Ibid., 104.
made another demand for payment.\textsuperscript{44} Roosevelt had proposed that America take over Dominican customhouses to ensure timely payment of debts as early as January 1905, however, the plan was held up in the Senate, which was reluctant for America to become involved.\textsuperscript{45} It took the threat of foreign intervention for Roosevelt to act, with or without Senate approval.\textsuperscript{46} In addition, the evidence suggests that the U.S. intervention was not taken at the behest of American corporate interests. It is worth noting that once the United States took over the customhouses American claims were treated the same as European claims, showing that the intervention did not favor only the United States, but was instead aimed at relieving all of the Dominican’s debts. Indeed, under the \textit{modus vivendi}, as it was called, the SDIC lost a preferred position in debt repayment it had held previously.\textsuperscript{47} Debts were reexamined by the United States and in many cases reduced. In fact, many of the creditors actually opposed the American plan of assumption of the Dominican debt.\textsuperscript{48} The SDIC was especially hostile to the readjustments in debt and for a while there was mutual antagonism between the American government and the corporation.\textsuperscript{49} The SDIC eventually dropped its complaints once it realized that it could not dissuade the American government from pursuing the \textit{modus vivendi}.\textsuperscript{50} However, the 1905 intervention did not bring permanent order and peace to the Dominican Republic. In November 1916 the United States launched a major military

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{44} Collin, 429.
\textsuperscript{45} Munro, 102.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 106.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 109.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 119.
\textsuperscript{49} Collin, 433.
\end{flushright}
intervention, setting up H.S. Knapp as military governor of the country.\textsuperscript{51} Dominican politics had not stabilized after the \emph{modus vivendi}, with constant conflict between the central government in Santo Domingo and local strongmen or \emph{caudillos}.\textsuperscript{52} Finally the tension became too great and civil war broke out in September 1913.\textsuperscript{53} The initial reaction from the Wilson administration was to push for a peaceful mediation of the dispute. The new American Minister, James Sullivan, was ordered to persuade the rebels to agree to a cease-fire and arbitration.\textsuperscript{54} However, attempts to end the conflict peacefully failed, and by 1916 the U.S. navy was routinely launching minor interventions to protect Americans and foreigners caught in the crossfire.\textsuperscript{55}

Finally, a full intervention was launched. Its primary goal was to keep Desiderio Arias, the most powerful of the \emph{caudillos} out of power. Arias was of particular concern to the United States, not simply because he was the most powerful \emph{caudillo}, but because he was unashamedly pro-German, at a time when war with the Kaiser was on the horizon.\textsuperscript{56} It is important to remember that even though Germany was then engaged in World War One, an allied victory was by no means certain, or even probable.\textsuperscript{57} The prospect of German influence in the Dominican Republic, via Arias and his fellow \emph{jimenistas}, weighed heavily on the minds of State Department officials, according to Herbert Stabler,

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 438.
\textsuperscript{51} Munro, 314.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 276.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 277.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 279.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 306.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 311.
\textsuperscript{57} Tucker, Spencer C., \textit{The Great War 1914-18} (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 121.
chief of the Latin American Division of the State Department at the time. Immediately after the occupation commenced, Knapp began censoring the press as well as personal correspondence, in addition he banned the private ownership of guns. This demonstrates that our intervention in 1916 was in no way an attempt to build democracy in the Dominican Republic, but an attempt to restore order and ensure stability.

After America’s entry to the war and Germany’s defeat in 1918, the government began to reevaluate its Dominican policy. Plans to change the military government to a “provisional government” that was more democratic were proposed by the State Department. America however, continued its presence for a few more years, due to bureaucratic infighting and problems with transition negotiations with Dominican leaders. Nevertheless, it was clear that with the end of the German threat in Latin America, America’s interest in the problems of the Dominican Republic had fallen off considerably.

---

Cuba 1906-1918

In 1906 the United States intervened in Cuba under the auspices of the Platt Amendment. Disputes between Liberals and Conservatives over the recent election had caused a collapse of the government. On September 29, Secretary of War, William Howard Taft took over the island as “Provisional Governor.” The 1906 intervention, as well as further involvement in Cuban politics, was an attempt to bring stability to the

---

58 Munro, 313.
59 Ibid., 314.
60 Ibid., 320.
61 Ibid., 324-25.
island and prevent any occurrences which might draw in European powers. The collapse of government on the island in 1905 led to widespread anarchy and the possibility of a destructive civil war. Europeans, afraid that their nationals might be targeted or at least put in jeopardy should this occur, began hinting at the possibly of intervention on their own if the United States did not move first.63

An interesting aspect of the American occupation of Cuba deals with the Ports Company contract. An American engineering firm, the Cuban Ports Company, was hired by the Cuban government to improve the infrastructure of the port of Havana. The contract was worth about $10,000,000.64 At first glance this appears to support the Marxist theory of American imperialism. The United States, controlling Cuba as a puppet, arranges for an American corporation to make millions “improving” the target country. Except for one thing, the federal government opposed the plan from the start. Secretary Knox stated that the contract was “a highly imprudent and dangerous fiscal policy which threatens to bring Cuba to a condition of national bankruptcy.”65 These are not the actions of a government in league with business. Instead it is consistent with the actions of nation concerned about stability in the Caribbean and familiar with the problems that fiscal insolvency can bring to the region.

Nicaragua 1912-1925

Instability was a fact of life for Central America at the beginning of the 20th

---

62 Ibid., 133.
63 Ibid., 135.
64 Ibid., 471.
65 Ibid., 473.
Century. Guatemala, Honduras, and Costa Rica had all been plagued with debt problems, and in 1901 Guatemala had drawn the ire of the Europeans over failing to make payments, leading to threats of armed intervention.\textsuperscript{66} Later, in 1907, when José Santos Zelaya, the president of Nicaragua, began supporting rebels in Honduras, the situation quickly escalated to full scale war, leading to the domination of Honduras by Nicaragua.\textsuperscript{67} American diplomats were able to help negotiate a peace treaty between all Central American states, committing the nations to a policy of peaceful coexistence.\textsuperscript{68} However continuing attempts by the republics to undermine each other via covert means continued with Nicaragua supporting rebels in El Salvador and countering moves by Guatemala and El Salvador against Nicaragua.\textsuperscript{69} Political chaos continued leading to civil war and the resignation of Zelaya in 1909.\textsuperscript{70} America had attempted to stay out of the fighting, but finally in 1912, President Taft ordered the first full scale armed intervention in Central America.\textsuperscript{71}

America’s intervention in the Nicaraguan civil war had very little to do with either ideology or economics. First, the civil war itself was not an ideological fight, Liberals and Conservatives were little more that the names of factions from Leon and Granada respectively, and people fought for their region, not their beliefs.\textsuperscript{72} As a result, any intervention by the United States cannot be seen as an intervention either for or against a particular system of beliefs. Second, the United States had remained distant from the

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 143.  
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 147.  
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 152.  
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., 155-6.  
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 179.  
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 215.
financial troubles American businessmen were having in Nicaragua, not intervening when Americans who had been granted special concessions by Zelaya had them revoked. In some cases America’s economic interests were divided, as some American nationals living in on the Atlantic Coast despised Zelaya’s economic policies, while the United Fruit Company had a heavy investment in some of Zelaya’s concessions. It is also worth noting that although Zelaya may have caused economic distress for American investors, the United States did nothing while he was in power. Indeed, our intervention in mid-1912 postdates Zelaya’s fall by two and a half years.

After the end of the 1909 civil war, the Nicaraguan government had offered itself as a protectorate to the United States, but the U.S. refused to commit, instead wishing to abide by earlier Central American treaties. In an attempt to preserve stability the American government proposed a custom receivership similar to the one that was, for the moment, working in the Dominican Republic. However, violence broke out again and the government of Nicaragua informed Washington that it would unable to properly protect the lives of Americans and other foreigners in the country. It was only then that American marines were landed in force to bring stability to the country and to protect the lives of non-combatants. The intervention of 1912 was mainly an attempt to defend American life and to assure the Europeans that their citizens’ lives would be protected as well. In addition, one must consider the proximity of Nicaragua to the Panama Canal

---

72 Ibid., 171.
73 Ibid., 168.
74 Ibid., 172.
75 Ibid., 190.
76 Ibid., 193.
77 Ibid., 205.
Zone, and any disorder in Nicaragua could easily spread given the history of Central American nations interfering in each others affairs.

Once the United States became heavily involved in Nicaragua, its main goal was to promote stability, not democracy. The minority Conservatives would be allowed to govern even though the Liberals would probably have won any free and fair election. Democracy was pushed back so that the U.S. government could be sure of temporary stability and security. It would be the start of an unfortunate and tragic trend in American policy making for the rest of the century. This policy did not change even with the ostensibly pro-democracy, idealist President Woodrow Wilson. Wilson’s Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan, considered Nicaragua vital to American national security and was willing to ignore democratic principles to ensure stability.

However, even though democracy was not a prime motivation for the American government, neither was economics. There was tension between Wall Street and the Wilson Administration over terms of loans to Nicaragua. Emiliano Chamorro, who led Nicaragua under U.S. supervision and approval, was economic nationalist who verbally attacked American bankers for what he felt was excessive outside control. Later, according to Munro, Chamorro “threatened to seize the customhouses” in an attempt to intimidate U.S. financial interests in order to gain a leg up during loan negotiations. Clearly, Chamorro was no puppet of American corporate interests. Rather, he was a confident leader who provided what America wanted from Nicaragua, stability.

---

78 Ibid., 216.
79 Ibid., 391.
80 Ibid., 394.
81 Ibid., 414-415.
**Haiti 1914-1934**

Of all the Caribbean republics, Haiti had the most European influence at the start of the 20th century. Germany and France were heavily invested in the finances of the Haitian government, much to the concern of the United States. It became the policy of the American government to “keep Haiti’s finances out of German hands” and so Washington pressured Haiti only to deal with the United States. However, Franco-German control was extensive. Haiti was primarily in debt to France and Germany, they controlled Haiti’s public utilities, in addition a majority of Haitian trade was carried on German ships. Given this large amount of penetration by Europeans it is not unreasonable to expect that they would intervene in case of any trouble on the island, although given the amount of influence the two powers held it might not take a crisis to bring Haiti firmly into a European nation’s sphere of influence. Secretary Bryan’s replacement, Secretary of State Robert Lansing, would later say that it was this desire to keep Germany out that drove America’s Haitian policy.

Haiti had been racked by civil war and assassination in the first years of the 20th century. There had been a civil war in 1902, which drew German intervention, coups in 1908 and 1911, and finally another civil war erupted in 1913. By January 1914 rebels had seized customhouses and a general state of anarchy prevailed over the republic. America and Germany intervened militarily, with French and British forces arriving soon.

---

82 Ibid., 247.
83 Ibid., 249.
84 Ibid., 326.
85 Ibid., 327.
after. However, this intervention merely protected nationals, and did nothing to stabilize the situation. Throughout 1914 things continued to get worse for Haiti. American plans to establish a Dominican style *modus vivendi* were frustrated by French and German insistence that they exercise control in tandem with the United States, a concession Washington was not willing to make. The State Department became concerned that German businessmen were gradually assuming political and financial control. Boaz Long, head of the Latin American Division, worried about an “ever present danger of German control” of Haiti.

By October the government fell and any sense of order disappeared. By the summer of 1915 Foreign Legations were being attacked and violated, and on July 28, American Marines were landed to forestall an almost certain Anglo-French landing. Finally, on September 16, a treaty was approved by the American and Haitian governments that “legitimized” the occupation. While no territory was seized by the United States, a provision was included that prevented the Haitians from transferring territory to anyone else. In addition, Article 14 of the treaty echoed the Platt Amendment allowing the United States to “lend an efficient aid for the preservation of Haitian independence.”

It is important to note that American intervention came only after the French Legation was attacked, virtually guaranteeing a foreign intervention. It is also worth

---

86 Ibid., 329.
87 Ibid., 333.
88 Ibid., 336.
89 Ibid., 342.
90 Ibid., 352.
91 Ibid., 357-8.
noting the no-transfer principle imposed on Haiti. While the U.S. had no use for the naval station, or else we would have taken it, it might prove useful to a nation which had few or no bases in the region. Economic gain was certainly not a prime motivator for U.S. policy as, the American approved Haitian Constitution of 1918 contained restrictions on foreign ownership of land, despite the problems that would cause to American business interests, since it would also cause problems for Europeans seeking influence as well.\textsuperscript{92} Also, when the Haitian American Corporation, which was owned by capitalists in Chicago and Indianapolis, suffered setbacks in sugar production as well as problems with local officials the State Department at first refused to help leading to the company’s bankruptcy in 1921.\textsuperscript{93}

Despite the end of the war in 1918, the American occupation would continue due to the progress that was being made and the somewhat amicable relations between Haiti and the United States through the 1920s. However, a violent rebellion in 1929, coupled with the lack of any foreign enemy to worry about during this period, led to plans for a complete American withdrawal, which was completed in 1934.\textsuperscript{94}

\textit{Nicaragua 1927-1933}

The 1927 intervention in Nicaragua is unique among the major interventions discussed in this section. By this time Imperial Germany had become the unstable Weimar Republic, which expressed no imperial ambitions. New arms control and peace treaties were being signed by all the major powers. The 1927 intervention occurred at a

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., 371.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 385-6.
lull in world tensions, yet security explanations still best explain America’s policy
towards Nicaragua during this time. By 1924, America’s will to intervene had dropped
considerably, making any attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of a Latin American
republic politically troublesome for U.S. policymakers. As a result, Washington began
planning for the withdrawal of Marines, much to the disappointment and disapproval of
Wall Street and corporate interests. However, banking and other capitalist interests were
ignored by the government and withdrawal proceeded anyway, with Marines finally being
withdrawn from Nicaragua on August 3, 1925.

Peace and democracy did not come to Nicaragua after the withdrawal. Instead,
Chamorro, having lost power in the 1924 presidential election, seized power from Carlos
Solórzano, the legitimate president, in 1926. However, this coup brought no real response
from the United States, making a mockery of the notion that the U.S. intervention had
been launched to defend democratic government. Civil war broke out again, between the
Chamorro regime and Liberals led by the usurped Solórzano’s Vice President, Juan B.
Sacasa. The United States once again attempted to mediate as it had 20 years prior. It
eventually recognized a compromise leader, Adolfo Diaz, as President. Unfortunately
for the United States, Mexico recognized Sacasa as President instead, and the fight

94 Ibid., 387.
95 Kamman, William, A Search for Stability: United States Diplomacy Toward
96 Ibid., 22.
97 Ibid., 35.
98 Ibid., 48-49
99 Ibid., 58.
100 Ibid., 68.
As the chaos continued, U.S. forces were landed to defend Americans and other foreigners. However, these interventions were only to defend lives, not to affect the outcome of the civil war. In fact, President Calvin Coolidge telegraphed Admiral Julian Latimer, the commander of U.S. forces in the area, that his actions, “should be of local nature only and solely for the protection of Americans and foreigners. There should be nothing in the nature of intervention or interference with the internal affairs of Nicaragua.”

In February 1927, a Platt-Amendment style arrangement was proposed by the Nicaraguan government, but this was rejected by the United States. Finally however, American efforts at mediation bore fruit, and in 1927 a general cease-fire was announced, based the promise that America would guarantee a free and fair election in 1928. On May 12, the Liberals signed on to this agreement and all the major rebel leaders laid down their arms except one, the nationalist Augusto Sandino.

At first Sandino was ignored by the Americans. As soon after the cease-fire was announced, the U.S. began withdrawing Marines from Nicaragua in anticipation of a general peace that would guarantee the safety of Americans and other foreigners living there. However, reports came in June that Sandino had taken to raiding American and European businesses, dismissing the hopes that foreigners would be safe without protection. With the prospect of European intervention returning if nothing was done

---

101 Ibid., 69.
102 Ibid., 85.
103 Ibid., 95.
104 Ibid., 121.
105 Ibid., 123.
106 Ibid., 125.
about the attacks, the U.S. sent the Marines after Sandino. Finally on July 16, the first battle between the Sandinistas and the Marines commenced, and battle continued the Marines pursued Sandino across the country. Now massive numbers of American troops would be sent to Nicaragua with the intent of putting down the Sandino rebellion and uphold the cease-fire.

The intervention was now one to keep the fragile Nicaraguan government from falling; America was now involved in the civil war. It is important to note that the United States only became involved after Sandino began attacking foreigners and American Marines, showing that the action was one of preventing European reprisals against Nicaragua and also to avenge the death of U.S. servicemen. Economics certainly did not drive the intervention since the government of Nicaragua only owed Americans a little over $1,000,000 and American investment in Nicaragua was lower than in any other nation in Central America. Obviously it was not concern for U.S. capital that motivated the sending of thousands of marines, but rather a desire for stability and security for all foreigners living in the country.

*The Good Neighbor*

At the Montevideo Conference of 1933, America announced what appeared to be radical break with its past Latin American policy. The U.S. would formally renounce interventionism, declaring that, “No state has the right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of another.” This change was made possible by the fact that no hostile

---

107 Ibid., 127-8.
108 Ibid., 132.
109 Ibid., 142.
110 Guerrant, Edward O. *Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor Policy* (Albuquerque: The
foreign power could exercise any influence in Latin America at that time, which eliminated any security threat to the United States coming from that region.

In addition America showed it was not willing to send in soldiers to combat to the forces of economic nationalism. In 1937, Bolivia expropriated American owned oil.\textsuperscript{111} Mexico also expropriated American owned oil companies in 1938. In both cases no attempts at military coercion were made.\textsuperscript{112} However, the U.S. did respond in kind with boycotts of Mexican oil, blocking loans to Bolivia and other forms of economic warfare. However, these policies where quickly abandoned when World War Two approached.\textsuperscript{113} In addition, during the early 1940s the U.S. gave Brazil aid to help it develop a domestic industrial capacity and accepted Venezuela’s demand that oil companies share half of their profits with Venezuela.\textsuperscript{114} These events show that in the absence of an extra-hemispheric threat, the U.S. was not willing to resort to violence and military force to achieve its objectives in Latin America.

Overall, U.S. policy during the Imperial Era was to make sure that it was dominant in the region in order to prevent any European powers from exercising influence. Interventions were undertaken to preempt possible European intervention, and when the chance arose America attempted to replace European influence in certain countries, such as Haiti. The primary concern for American policymakers during this era was Germany, which had declared a desire for empire. Other European nations were also

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 80.
\item\textsuperscript{112} Ibid. 17.
\item\textsuperscript{113} Smith P., 75-78
\item\textsuperscript{114} Rabe, Stephen G. \textit{Eisenhower and Latin America} (Chapel Hill: The University of
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
of concern, but not as great as Germany.

With the end of World War One, the main rationale for intervention had disappeared, although American troops did stay in some Latin American countries past the end of war and into the 1920s. During this era control over the Caribbean was paramount, while events elsewhere in Latin America, such as German activities in Brazil were ignored, or at least not of great enough concern to draw a military response. After the disastrous intervention in Nicaragua in the 1920s and the absence of any foreign threat America felt confident enough to switch to a non-interventionist policy. However, this policy would only last as long as America felt secure in its hemisphere. With the reemergence of a foreign threat, coupled with what was seen as a foreign ideology, American intervention in Latin America returned.

Part Two: The Cold War

1945-1992
With the end of the Imperial Era in international relations, President Franklin Roosevelt was free to renounce U.S. interventionism in Latin America. However, this would only last as long as American policymakers could be sure that no extra-hemispheric power had an interest in Latin America. Until the outbreak of the Cold War, America pursued what was called the “Good Neighbor” policy, and no interventions were undertaken until 1954. However, once the Cold War started, America’s policy quickly shifted to one similar to that of the earlier Imperial Era. The U.S. would support friendly dictators against what it saw as a the hostile, foreign, ideology of communism. During this era, human rights would take back seat to security as the U.S. gave aid to some of the most brutal regimes ever hold power in the Western Hemisphere. However, the United States was not inalterably opposed to reform either, supporting some friendly left-wing governments and reformist movements. However, at the first sign of Marxism, the U.S. would respond viciously. This would continue until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Outbreak of the Cold War

The alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union during World War Two had always been one of necessity and once the necessity of defeating Nazi Germany
was eliminated, the alliance began to fall apart. Mutual distrust and hatred for each other's systems of government would probably make any long-lasting cooperation impossible. Even during the war, the U.S. saw Soviet attempts to bring liberated countries into their sphere of influence as parts of the larger policy of aggression. Communists supported by the USSR had taken over Poland by early 1945. Later that year, President Harry Truman became concerned over Soviet attempts to intimidate Turkey into conceding bases along the Turkish straits, and Soviet troop concentrations in Northern Iran. However, for the most part these were traditional areas of Russian interest and Stalin had been willing to accede to American demands. As a result the United States was not overly concerned with Soviet expansionism just yet. Regarding Latin America, U.S. policymakers were not worried about fighting communism there as late as 1948, and some even expressed concern that some right-wing governments would use anti-communism as an excuse to crackdown on all dissent. What would change the situation and convince U.S. policymakers that communism was indeed a threat world-wide, even in the Western Hemisphere, were two distant events, the communist coup in Czechoslovakia in 1948 and the Korean War in 1950.

In 1948, Czechoslovakia was a free, democratic nation in which Communists had a plurality, but not a majority, in the national parliament. For a while it seemed that Marxists and non-Marxists could co-exist peacefully in a coalition government.

116 Ibid., 27.
117 Ibid., 28.
118 Ibid. 112-13.
119 Rabe, 15.
However, this ended when Communist ministers saw their chance to consolidate power over the country. First, non-Communists were purged from government positions. Next after non-communist ministers resigned in protest, the remaining Communists seized power rather than hold new elections as was expected. Finally after gaining power, they began executing opponents of the regime. The lesson to American policymakers was clear, a government which contained Communists, even if they were a minority and in a democratic coalition, would be under threat falling to Communist dictatorship, which would then ally with the Soviets.

After the Second World War, Korea had been divided into two, North and South along the 38th parallel. The Soviets installed a communist government in the North, while the U.S. supported a right-wing government in the South. There had been an uneasy peace between the two Koreas, but that peace was broken on June 25, 1950 when 100,000 North Korean soldiers, with tanks and other heavy weapons of war supplied by the Soviets attacked across the border in an attempt to forcefully annex the South. In America, this was seen as a proxy war, directed by Stalin in attempt to spread communism. This was the second lesson American policymakers, that once a government turned communist and allied to the Soviets, Moscow would try to use them to aggressively expand communism at the expense of the free world. With these two assumptions about the Soviets and communism in general, U.S. policy globally, and in Latin America especially, radically changed.

Finally, a quick note on nuclear war. Smith points out that during the Cold War,

---

120 Offner, 236.
121 Ibid., 367.
nuclear weapons had changed the way war and peace was conceived. Both nations had the ability to destroy each other, and this deterrence might create a situation where both sides, “found themselves locked in a nuclear standoff, accumulating arsenals they could never use.”\textsuperscript{122} If we accept this view of the Cold War, then ideas about security concerns seem rather absurd. After all, why would America care about Soviet bases in the Western Hemisphere, if war was impossible? However, to American policymakers, a Third World War was more complicated than simple mutual suicide. First, Americans were concerned that the Soviets did not see nuclear war in the same terms as they did. For a good part of the Cold War, the Soviets expressed a belief that they could win a nuclear war.\textsuperscript{123} It was feared that if the Soviets felt that the balance of power swung too far to their side, they could attempt general war against the West.\textsuperscript{124} There were also concerns over whether nuclear weapons would provide deterrence at all or whether a world leader could bring him or herself to use them.\textsuperscript{125} As such, American policymakers could not rely only nuclear weapons for security, but more traditional balance of power concerns that drove U.S. policy in the first part of the century.

\textit{A New Policy for Latin America}

By 1950, the American foreign policy establishment had whipped itself into a state of panic over the Soviet Union. A classified memo, NSC-68 described the Soviets

\textsuperscript{122} Smith P., 121.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 93.
as fanatics bent on world domination and committed to the destruction or enslavement of the Free World. It is worth noting that this document was not released to the public until 25 years after it was written, so there is no reason to think it is a piece of propaganda meant for the public, but rather an honest assessment of how policymakers felt at the start of the Cold War. Key foreign policy adviser George Kennan was concerned about the possible balance of power shift if the Communists gained favor in a large portion of Latin America. Kennan recommended that the U.S. support any government that cracked down on Communists, no matter what means it used. While he hoped that democracy might be enough to fight off communists, he argued that the U.S. should support any means necessary to suppress them, including what he called, “harsh government measures of protection.” This was the intellectual beginning of America’s policy for the western hemisphere for the next 40 years.

Congress began approving massive amounts of military aid for Latin America, allocating $38 million in 1951 and $51 million in 1952. The Eisenhower administration became concerned that Communists could exploit the growing unrest in the Third World, particularly in Latin America. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles expressed a fear that “the Communists are trying to extend their form of despotism in this hemisphere.” In addition, the administration began an anti-Communist propaganda campaign in Latin America.

127 Smith, G., 69.
128 Smith, G., 70.
129 Rabe, 22-23.
130 Ibid., 30.
America, distributing comics, cartoons, and producing radio shows.\textsuperscript{131}

However, President Dwight Eisenhower went beyond simple public relation programs, and began supporting various authoritarian regimes with military aid in order to guarantee that friendly governments would remain in power.\textsuperscript{132} Dulles summed up America’s policy when he said that he would prefer, “flourishing little democracies.” However he was willing to accept, “governments which contributed to a [sic] stability in the area were preferable to those which introduced instability…which would lead to Communist penetration.”\textsuperscript{133}

\textit{Guatemala 1954}

The new policy would first reveal itself in Guatemala, where the United States would launch its first major intervention since Nicaragua in 1927. Major economic reforms began in the late 1940s under President Arevalo, which were then continued by Jacobo Arbenz after his election in 1951. The centerpiece of Arbenz’s reform was a land redistribution program in 1952.\textsuperscript{134} However, the program drew the ire of the United Fruit corporation, which faced massive expropriations of its uncultivated property.\textsuperscript{135} Disputes arose over the compensation allotted for United Fruit. The company claimed it should be paid 75 dollars an acre, what it considered its true value, rather than the three dollars an acre it claimed when it paid its taxes.\textsuperscript{136}

Despite this admission of gross tax fraud, the company had allies and support in

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 33.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 36.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 39.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 44.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 45
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 46.
the Eisenhower administration, which was suspicious of people in the Guatemalan government. There were four communists in Arbenz’s government, although none were appointed to important positions. However, the U.S. still viewed Arbenz as a “Communist dupe or worse.” The smoking gun for those who believed this was the discovery on May 15, 1954 that Guatemala had received arms shipments from the Soviet bloc. Just over one month later on June 18, 1954, the U.S. backed an invasion of Guatemala by Colonel Carlos Armas to topple the Arbenz government.

On the surface this is the strongest case in support of the Marxist theory of U.S. foreign policy. A reformist government, threatens the commercial interests of an American corporation, and so the U.S. reacts to put a pro-U.S. government back into power. Dulles himself admitted that there was no concrete evidence linking Arbenz to Moscow and the evidence that Guatemala was receiving Soviet arms is less shocking when one considers that the U.S. had thwarted their efforts to buy arms from other sources. The administration vigorously denied that it was acting on behalf of United Fruit, but should one believe it? There are a few facts that suggest that the intervention was undertaken because the government thought that there was a danger of communism in Guatemala and not for the sake of U.S. corporations.

First, the U.S. had accepted economic reforms for years before the intervention, and had waited two years after the United Fruit expropriations to act. It was only after the arms shipment that the U.S. intervened, of course this just might have been the political

---

137 Ibid., 47.
138 Ibid., 53.
139 Ibid., 56.
140 Ibid., 57.
cover the government was looking for all along. Second, after the intervention the U.S. was very supportive of other reform regimes in Latin America. The U.S. gave millions of dollars in aid to the revolutionary government of Bolivia, which pursued similar reforms as Guatemala. In 1957, the U.S. government would give military aid to the democratic government of Costa Rica, which was involved in a war against Anastasio Somoza of Nicaragua. As Stephen Rabe points out, the U.S. was “assisting a acerbic critic of its Latin American policy and spurning Somoza, a long time ally.”

However, the evidence does not conclusively point either way. There are those who will see it as a sincere effort to fight communist influence in the hemisphere and those who see it as a simple act of greed. It is impossible to know what was in the heart and mind of President Eisenhower when he gave the go ahead to overthrow Arbenz. Was he taken in by the hysteria of the era and did sincerely believe that Guatemala was a threat, or was he a stooge for United Fruit?

_Cuba 1961_

By the late 1950s, the Cold War mindset that had led to Arbenz’s overthrow had died down to some extent. Without fear of Communism penetrating Latin America, the United States felt free to encourage democracy in the region. Despite Secretary Dulles’ best efforts, by 1959 President Eisenhower was encouraging democracies over dictatorships. The effect was tangible as ten authoritarian governments fell in the late

---

141 Ibid., 58.
142 Ibid., 77-78
143 Ibid., 86.
1950s.\textsuperscript{144} For a time it seemed that Latin America would be removed as a theater of the Cold War, then Cuban revolution occurred.

In January 1959, a young radical named Fidel Castro came to power, as Fulgencio Batista, the dictator of Cuba, fled Havana.\textsuperscript{145} Batista had been overthrown by a broad-based movement made up of Cubans from business owners to peasants who were tired of the dictator’s corrupt and incompetent rule.\textsuperscript{146} Although Batista had been a client of the U.S. for years, he was caught in the new pro-democracy policy of the late 1950s. The U.S. cut off all arms shipments in March 1958 and constantly pressured Batista to step down, finally abandoning him in December.\textsuperscript{147} American policymakers were somewhat wary of Castro leading Cuba after the revolution, but for the most part the U.S. would accept the new regime.\textsuperscript{148} In fact, the United States was the first country to recognize Castro’s government.\textsuperscript{149}

However, some U.S. policymakers were suspicious of Castro from the start. The CIA felt that, “The Castro regime was moving more and more towards an outright dictatorship.”\textsuperscript{150} Almost immediately after naming himself Premier of Cuba, he purged moderates from the government and executed over 500 of Batista’s former supporters.\textsuperscript{151} As 1959 went on, Castro moved steadily towards the far-left on issues such as property

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 104.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 117.
\textsuperscript{147} Rabe, 121.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., 122.
\textsuperscript{149} Welch, 29.
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., 34.
\textsuperscript{151} Rabe, 123.
rights and the market economy. By the start of 1960, Castro identified himself with the Cuban Communist Party and purged all anti-communists from the main Cuban labor union, the Congress of the Revolutionary Confederation of Labor. He also purged many of his former allies, jailing some, while other fled to Florida.

Starting in 1960, the Eisenhower administration began planning for removing Castro if it could not longer, “tolerate the Castro regime in Cuba.” By this time Castro had asked for aid from the Soviet Union, and expressed interest in an alliance. Relations between the U.S. and Cuba deteriorated quickly after that. The U.S. interpreted Castro’s hostility as evidence of Communist influence. As a result, the U.S. began to take measures against Cuba, starting with economic sanctions in the summer of 1960, targeting Cuba’s sugar exports to the United States. Unfortunately for the U.S. the result of this was to drive Castro closer to the Soviets, as Moscow quickly moved in to cover any economic losses suffered by Havana. In addition, Castro retaliated further by seizing the remaining American property in Cuba. In essence, Eisenhower’s policy cost American capitalists around $900 million, as they lost all their investments.

As 1960 wore on, it became clear that Moscow considered its new found ally a valuable asset, and one it was willing to defend with nuclear weapons. Three days after Eisenhower cut Cuban sugar exports to the United States, Soviet leader Nikita

---

152 Welch., 14.
153 Ibid., 16.
154 Rabe, 125.
155 Ibid., 128.
156 Welch, 21.
157 Ibid., 41.
158 Ibid., 50.
159 Ibid., 51.
Khrushchev gave a speech in Moscow in which he stated that the Soviet Union could “support the Cuban people with their rocket fire if the aggressive forces in the Pentagon dare launch an intervention against Cuba.”

On October 19, 1960, the U.S. ended all trade with Cuba, beginning the controversial policy that continues to this day. Finally on January 3, 1961, President Eisenhower severed all diplomatic relations with Cuba.

President John F. Kennedy came to office with many of the same perceptions as Eisenhower did. Kennedy saw a “full-scale Latin American Cold War” and believed that Castro must be dealt with. For Kennedy, Cuba was just another front in the Cold War, no different that Western Europe or Southeast Asia. Reports surfaced of Soviet arms shipment to Castro and of Cubans being sent back to Eastern Europe for training in a Soviet version of the School of the Americas. As a result, time was not America’s side.

With Castro becoming more secure in Cuba, and becoming closer to the Soviets everyday, Kennedy made the decision to act quickly, and the CIA launched its proxy invasion of Cuba on April 17, 1961, in the now infamous Bay of Pigs.

In two years American policy towards Cuba went from acceptance of Castro’s rule, to a covert invasion to remove him. It is apparent that it was his perceived and then actual ties to the Soviet Union that caused this hostility. The first American moves against Castro predate his total expropriation of American property, and in fact may have precipitated it, costing American investors almost a billion dollars. Although a plan to

---

160 Ibid., 54.
161 Ibid., 58.
162 Ibid., 59.
163 Ibid., 65.
164 Ibid., 67.
165 Ibid., 73.
topple Castro was in the works almost immediately after he took power, it took concerns over Soviet aid and Khrushchev’s speech to trigger the ill-fated Bay of Pigs.

**Dominican Republic 1965**

After Castro took power, the United States realized that Latin America was not as stable as it had previously hoped, and the threat that Communism posed seemed more acute than ever. America continued the late 1950s policy of trying to befriend democracies and shunning or even moving against what were perceived as unstable right-wing autocracies. In 1960 Eisenhower announced the creation of the Social Progress Trust Fund, which would provide hundreds of millions of dollars to help raise the standard of living in Latin America. It was hoped that this would help prevent the extremism that fueled Marxist sympathies among poor Latin Americans. Eisenhower also tried to mend fences with leftist leaders, including the radical President of Venezuela, Romulo Betancourt, who had previously denounced American influence in the Venezuelan economy. Of course, old habits die hard, and included in this wave of embracing Latin America was about $400 million in military aid, primarily meant to fight insurgency. However, at least publicly Eisenhower championed peaceful change in the hemisphere, encouraging “a more equitable distribution of national income…and through peaceful means rather than violent.”

Rafael Trujillo, the dictator of the Dominican Republic was the first tyrant to fall

---

166 Ibid., 78.
167 Rabe, 141.
168 Ibid., 144.
169 Ibid., 146.
under this new policy. Trujillo had long been an ally of the United States. After he seized power in 1930, America quickly recognized him and established relations.\textsuperscript{171} He cooperated with the United States against the Axis in World War Two.\textsuperscript{172} However, soon after the end of the war, special treatment for him and aid to the Dominican Republic was cut off.\textsuperscript{173} When the Cold War began, Trujillo saw his chance and became a passionate anti-Communist in order to gain U.S. favor again.\textsuperscript{174} His plan worked, and aid to the Dominican Republic increased drastically during the 1950s.\textsuperscript{175}

However, the Cuban revolution had forced the U.S. to reconsider its partnerships with dictators in Latin America. Eisenhower was concerned that Trujillo’s rule was creating the same kind of anti-American and pro-Marxist extremism that led to Castro.\textsuperscript{176} Later, Trujillo was implicated in the death of an American citizen, Charles Murphy, which embarrassed and infuriated the Eisenhower administration.\textsuperscript{177} Around the same time the U.S. began plotting against Castro, plans were drawn up to intervene in the Dominican Republic, if Trujillo’s reckless actions led to a Communist revolt.\textsuperscript{178} Finally, Trujillo began a covert war against Venezuela, aiding an failed military coup in April 1960, and attempting to assassinate President Betancourt in June.\textsuperscript{179} By now, Eisenhower was fed up with Trujillo and his antics and the U.S. severed diplomatic relations with the

\textsuperscript{170} Ibid., 148.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., 60.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid., 83.
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., 74.
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid., 100.
\textsuperscript{176} Rabe, 153.
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid., 154.
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid., 156.
Dominican Republic on August 26, 1960. The U.S. enacted sanctions against Trujillo in January 1961, with Latin American support. This lack of support probably doomed the dictator, who was killed on May 30, 1961.

After Trujillo’s death, the United States was left without a policy in Dominican Republic. Anarchy gripped the country until the election of Juan Bosch in December 1962. The U.S. embraced the new democratic government, and it seemed like things might work out after all. However, a familiar pattern reasserted itself, and Bosch was overthrown within a year. The coup leaders called themselves the “Triumvirate” and were recognized as the government of the Dominican Republic by the United States on December 14, 1963. It was hoped that the Triumvirate would bring stability and democracy might someday be restored.

However, the coup failed to bring peace to the country. Militant far leftists had opposed the Triumvirate from the start, launching a guerrilla war in October 1963, and continued resistance until 1965. The left was disorganized, but had a common goal, the overthrow of the Triumvirate. This of course led the U.S. to support the government, particularly the pro-American Reid Cabral, who had been opposed to Trujillo and appeared to be a competent and forceful leader, one who could stabilize the situation.

Nevertheless, the Dominicans failed to share the American Government’s infatuation
with Cabral, who had managed to alienate both the left, right, and just about every one in between. Public opinion surveys showed that he the support of around five percent of the nation. In fact, Reid was so disliked, that on April 24, 1965 he was overthrown by the Army, who now supported Bosch, the man they had overthrown almost two years earlier. Unfortunately for Bosch, although he now had the support of the Army, he also was supported by the Communists and other leftists, which drew the ire of the United States.

At first the United States felt that Bosch did not have enough support to lead the Dominican Republic. It was believed instead that a provisional junta would take power instead. However, the military could not agree on who should lead, and the junta failed to form, instead leaving the Dominican Republic in state of civil war as pro and anti-Bosch military forces battled for control. America became concerned about a Bosch regime, supported by the Left, coming to power, but held off any intervention due to the belief that anti-Bosch forces would win the day. As the battle wore on though, The United States became less confident about this, and on April 26, the Caribbean Ready Squadron, comprised of about 1800 men, was standing by in case an intervention was ordered.

The first landing occurred on April 28, with President Lyndon Johnson initially

---

186 Ibid., 44.
187 Ibid., 48.
188 Ibid., 50.
189 Ibid., 58.
190 Ibid., 71.
191 Ibid., 80.
192 Ibid., 82.
193 Ibid., 88.
ordering 500 Marines into the Dominican Republic. However, it appeared that this would not be enough. On April 29 the anti-Bosch junta had basically been beaten and the pro-Bosch rebels victorious. The belief in Washington was that this meant a “pro-Communist government,” and the 82nd Airborne was readied for action. By the first week of May, about 23,000 soldiers were sent to the Dominican Republic. Their orders were simple. As General Earl Wheeler explained it to a subordinate, “Your unstated mission is to prevent the Dominican Republic from going Communist. The President had stated that he will not allow another Cuba.”

Concerns over security drove American policy in the Dominican Republic during this era. The United States had no problem supporting Trujillo when he was opposed to the Axis, or supporting the U.S. in the Cold War, but Washington turned on him when he became a security risk instead of an asset. In no way did the U.S. care about democracy in the country as although the U.S. initially supported Bosch when he was elected, policymakers just as quickly supported the Triumvirate when they came to power. The main goal was to support any regime which could provide stability. Finally, it was the prospect of another “Cuba” that drove the U.S. to send over 20,000 troops to prevent this from happening. In many ways this was similar to the 1916 intervention, when U.S. forces were landed to prevent the supposedly pro-German Arias from coming to power.

Chile 1973

---

194 Ibid., 103.
195 Ibid., 108.
196 Ibid., 111.
197 Ibid., 112.
When Lyndon Johnson assumed the presidency in 1963 after President Kennedy’s
death he quickly turned from the previous pro-democracy policy of Kennedy and
Eisenhower and towards a more old-fashioned pragmatic one. The U.S. would return to
funding and supporting any anti-communist government, with a blind eye towards their
human rights policies. The greatest examples of this new policy, which would be called
the Mann Doctrine after assistant secretary of state for economic affairs Thomas C.
Mann, would be Brazil, where America supported a right-wing military government
which seized power in 1964 and in Chile where a left-wing government was overthrown
in 1973. \(^{199}\)

During World War Two, Chile received substantial aid as a reward for breaking
with the Axis powers and aiding the American war effort. \(^{200}\) After the Cuban Revolution,
Chile was chosen to be the model for America’s new program of promoting democratic
peaceful reforms rather than violent revolution. The United States encouraged land
reform as a way to head off any Marxists coming to power either through violence or the
ballot box. \(^{201}\)

However, more traditional methods were also used to combat the Left, as the U.S.
sent about $25 million in military aid to Chile in 1963 and also helped train
counterinsurgency officers in the United States. \(^{202}\) The CIA also became involved,

\(^{198}\) Ibid., 116.
\(^{199}\) Smith P., 157-58.
\(^{200}\) Sigmund, Paul E. *The United States and Democracy in Chile* (Baltimore: The Johns
Hopkins University Press, 1993), 12.
\(^{201}\) Ibid., 15.
\(^{202}\) Ibid., 19.
supporting various right-wing and moderate parties. In 1964, the CIA sent around $3 million to the centrist Eduardo Frei in his campaign against the socialist Salvador Allende. This support, along with a center-right alliance against the left contributed to Frei’s victory with 56 percent of the vote compared to Allende’s 39 percent. Frei carried out some reforms of the economy, and it seemed that Chile would continue to be a stable ally of the U.S. However, things began to radically change as the 1970 election approached.

In 1967 the Socialist party formally embraced Marxism declaring that, “revolutionary violence is inevitable and legitimate,” and that “peaceful and legal reforms are limited instruments…which lead to armed struggle.” Given this, the CIA increased its efforts in Chile to prevent this new overtly Marxist socialism form coming to power. The CIA sent $350,000 to affect legislative elections in 1969. The CIA also supported left-wing groups which disagreed with the new path the Socialists were taking. Overall, the CIA carried out 20 covert operations in Chile between 1964 and 1970. However, this proved to be ineffective as the center-right coalition collapsed in 1970, leading to a split of the anti-Marxist vote, with the right-wing Jorge Alessandri winning 34.9%, centrist Radomiro Tomic winning 27.8% and Socialist Allende winning 36.1%. For all the CIA’s efforts, for the first time a Marxist government had been freely elected.

Almost immediately after, the U.S. government began considering measures to

---

203 Ibid., 20.
204 Ibid., 22.
205 Ibid., 25.
206 Ibid., 32.
207 Ibid., 33.
208 Ibid., 35.
prevent Allende from taking office. It was believed by U.S. policymakers that Allende’s win had been financed by Cuba and the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{210} As such, concerns about democracy in Chile were put aside by the government as trivial compared to the threat of a Soviet puppet ruling in South America. National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger considered the Chilean voters “irresponsible” for voting in Allende in the first place, so the U.S. should not be concerned about subverting a fellow democracy.\textsuperscript{211} The first plan was to prevent Allende from assuming the presidency by having the military call new elections. At the same time the U.S. would pursue a policy of economic warfare design to “make the economy scream.”\textsuperscript{212}

Mostly however, U.S. policy was designed to encourage a coup against Allende. Attempts to keep Allende out of the presidency failed, and resulted in the death of one of Chile’s top generals, Rene Schneider, who had opposed the plan.\textsuperscript{213} After Allende was inaugurated, the CIA began funding the opposition, giving over $1 million to anti-Allende media outlets.\textsuperscript{214} Concern over Chile rose in September 1971 when Allende began expropriating American companies and charged the companies for their activities in Chile, demanding that the Anaconda Company pay $78 million and Kennecott $310 million.\textsuperscript{215} However, it would still be another two years before the coup.

Reports surfaced in early 1972 that Chile was receiving arms from Cuba, a charge

\textsuperscript{209} Ibid., 42.  
\textsuperscript{210} Ibid., 42.  
\textsuperscript{211} Smith P., 172.  
\textsuperscript{212} Sigmund, 50.  
\textsuperscript{213} Ibid., 53.  
\textsuperscript{214} Ibid., 59.  
\textsuperscript{215} Ibid., 62. 
which reinforced American perceptions of Cuban and Soviet influence over Allende.\textsuperscript{216}

American economic warfare continued into 1972, with the U.S. attempting to block credit and aid to Chile, but this measure did not prove effective.\textsuperscript{217} In October 1972, Chilean truckers went on strike in protest of Allende’s economic and political policy. This strike quickly spread to other sectors of the economy.\textsuperscript{218} It was widely suspected that CIA helped fund this strike.\textsuperscript{219}

As the 1973 legislative elections rolled around, it was clear that the government was beginning to lose popular support, with the pro-government vote dropping from around 50% in 1971 to 44% in 1973. The unified opposition received about 56%.\textsuperscript{220} The political situation deteriorated into the summer of 1973, with a failed army insurrection in June. Also that summer, the left had taken control of the television stations, and it was thought that Leftists were organizing and arming into a paramilitary force outside the control of the regular armed forces. Right-wing forces began a series of bombings, and in July, truckers went back on strike.\textsuperscript{221} Finally, Chilean democracy collapsed when the Army overthrew the Allende government on September 11, 1973.\textsuperscript{222}

So what was the U.S. role in all this? Clearly America contributed to the conditions which led to the coup, with its policy of economic warfare. However, the U.S. role in this event was not nearly as clear as other interventions, such as the Guatemalan coup, the Bay of Pigs, or the Invasion of the Dominican Republic. It is clear however, that

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{216} Ibid., 66.
\item\textsuperscript{217} Ibid., 67.
\item\textsuperscript{218} Ibid., 69.
\item\textsuperscript{219} Ibid., 70.
\item\textsuperscript{220} Ibid., 72-73.
\item\textsuperscript{221} Ibid., 76.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
American supported reform efforts by the Frei government before Allende, and hostility
to Allende, “antedated any hostile action,” taken by him.\textsuperscript{223} Overall, it is unclear how long
the U.S. would have refrained from any overt action such as in Guatemala or the
Dominican Republic if General Augusto Pinochet had not overthrown the government
himself.

\textit{Nicaragua 1977-1990}

As the 1970s continued it seemed like a shift had occurred in global politics.
Détente had taken hold, and it seemed that a new era of understanding between the
United States and the Soviet Union had arrived. President Richard Nixon’s visit to
Beijing and Moscow led one overly optimistic historian to declare in 1974, “The cold war
was over, ended in large part through the efforts of an American President who had been
one the resolute cold-warriors.”\textsuperscript{224} President Jimmy Carter had declared that “fear of
communism” would no longer dictate American foreign policy.\textsuperscript{225} In 1977 he cut off
economic and military aid due to dictator Anastasio Somoza’s human rights abuses.
Without this aid, his opponents felt free to rise up and in October the FSLN (Sandinista
National Liberation Front) began attacking government installations.\textsuperscript{226} By 1978 a broad-
based movement had formed against Somoza.\textsuperscript{227} The U.S. did not come to Somoza’s

\begin{footnotes}
\item[222] Ibid., 79.
\item[223] Ibid., 57.
\item[224] Manchester, William The Glory and the Dream: A Narrative History of America
\item[225] LeoGrande, William M. Our Own Backyard: The United States in Central America
\item[226] Ibid., 17.
\item[227] Ibid., 20.
\end{footnotes}
rescue, as Carter did not want U.S. forces to be used to prop up a brutal dictator. After Somoza refused mediation of the civil war, the U.S. imposed sanctions against Nicaragua in January 1979. Without the support of the United States, Somoza was doomed. The FSLN took over on July 19, 1979.

Most U.S. policymakers had few problems with letting Somoza fall, however some were concerned about the FSLN taking over. The FSLN had been supplied by the Cubans since the 1960s, and to some that meant that Castro would be following the FSLN into Managua. To them, détente was failing, the Soviets had not been sincere in their desire for peaceful co-existence. Cuban/Soviet interventions in Angola in 1975 and Ethiopia in 1978 as well as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 proved to some policymakers that the Soviets still harbored expansionist desires. In addition, the “discovery of a Soviet combat brigade in Cuba” alarmed those suspicious of Soviet intentions in the world.

Despite this, the U.S. at first tried to keep good relations with the FSLN. The U.S. sent around $10 million in aid to help refugees of the war. In September 1979, about $8.5 million in economic aid was sent. For 1980, $75 million in aid was budgeted for Nicaragua. However, relations between Washington and Managua would deteriorate quickly after reports of Nicaraguan involvement in the civil war in El Salvador. Intelligence indicated that the FSLN was aiding the FMLN (Farabundo Marti Front for

---

229 Ibid., 35.
230 Ibid., 15.
231 LeoGrande, 53.
232 Arnson, 37.
National Liberation) with arms shipments. The CIA reported that it found a “very high likelihood that training and weapons support for the Salvadoran insurgents was occurring and represented official FSLN policy.” It was because of this support by the FSLN that Carter suspended aid in early 1981.

When Ronald Reagan came to office in 1981 he faced a choice on whether to cut off aid to Nicaragua entirely, or to try and work with the FSLN. At first, he chose the latter. It seemed as though a diplomatic solution might be possible, as the FSLN admitted to working with the FMLN in the past, but pledged not to in the future. However, many in the Reagan administration refused to believe this, and they argued for a complete cut off, against the wishes of the more moderate advisers. In the end, distrust carried the day, and Reagan chose to permanently cut off aid to the FSLN, which of course led to promises of massive aid from the Soviet bloc. Almost immediately, the U.S. began working on another invisible blockade by attempting to “strangle” the Nicaraguan economy. However, it would not be just simple economic warfare like in Chile. This time the government would revisit the strategy that had worked in Guatemala and finance a covert exile army, known as the “Contras” to fight the FSLN.

The Contra War continued throughout Reagan’s presidency, and investigations

---

233 LeoGrande, 30.
234 Ibid., 31.
235 Arnson, 49.
236 Ibid., 51.
237 LeoGrande, 105.
238 Ibid., 106.
239 Ibid., 107-108.
240 Ibid., 110.
241 Ibid., 111.
over his conduct of the war nearly led to his impeachment. All attempts at negotiations during his term had failed, it seemed that it would take a new president, and shift in the global political climate to end the war. 1989 would bring both. President George H.W. Bush approved cuts in aid to Contras on March 24, 1989, and would later support the Central American peace accords which the Reagan administration had resisted.

Elections were held in 1990 between the FSLN and the opposition party, UNO (National Opposition Union). The U.S. would give around $9 million in aid to election, a large part going to UNO. This aid, along with many other factors, led to the victory of Violeta Chamorro of UNO over Daniel Ortega and the FSLN on February 25, 1990. With this, the Contra War ended.

America at first tried to work with the FSLN, with Carter promising almost $100 million in aid in 1979. However, hostility was trigged by FSLN support for the FMLN in El Salvador, which convinced many U.S. policy makers that the FSLN was dedicated to spreading revolution and could not be trusted. Clearly America, or at least the Carter administration, was not irrevocably hostile to reform, it was only when they thought that the FSLN was spreading revolution did they move against them.

*El Salvador 1979-1992*

The U.S. support for the authoritarian government of El Salvador was closely linked with the rise of the FSLN in Nicaragua. El Salvador had been under the control of

---

242 Ibid., 501.
243 Arnson, 233.
244 Ibid., 236.
245 Ibid., 238.
a military dictatorship for decades before the 1970s.\textsuperscript{246} They had received moderate amounts of aid during their reign, but in 1977 they rejected American aid rather than submit to Carter’s policy of inspecting the human rights situation in El Salvador.\textsuperscript{247} On October 15, 1979 a reformist coup overthrew the regime, and promised to correct the worst elements of the old guard.\textsuperscript{248} The new junta wanted to bring in representatives of the left, something that alarmed the United States.\textsuperscript{249} However, these plans fell through and leftist guerrillas continued the fight against the government.\textsuperscript{250} In 1980, aid, albeit non-lethal aid, was restored to El Salvador.\textsuperscript{251}

Throughout 1980, the Salvadoran government began moving back towards the right, while leftist guerrillas began coordinating forces, uniting into the FMLN, the group that the FSLN was supporting.\textsuperscript{252} The FMLN, sensing that the U.S. was becoming more and more supportive of fighting leftists worldwide as détente collapsed, prepared a final offensive to take over El Salvador before the U.S. could react. The FMLN received arms shipments from the Cubans, via Nicaragua in late 1980.\textsuperscript{253} This move effectively ended the debate in the U.S. over whether to support the Salvadoran regime or not. Carter lifted the ban on lethal aid, and $5.9 million was sent on January 14, 1981.\textsuperscript{254} When Reagan was inaugurated the floodgates were opened. On February 27, $25 million in military aid was sent. In addition, the amount of U.S. advisers would be doubled. Covert operations would

\textsuperscript{246} LeoGrande, 36.
\textsuperscript{247} Ibid., 38.
\textsuperscript{248} Ibid., 40.
\textsuperscript{249} Ibid., 41.
\textsuperscript{250} Ibid., 42.
\textsuperscript{251} Ibid., 44.
\textsuperscript{252} Ibid., 47.
\textsuperscript{253} Ibid., 68-69.
receive $19.5 million to perform political and paramilitary operations in El Salvador.\(^{255}\) America was now fully committed to propping up the Salvadoran regime.

As with Nicaragua, changes only came with President Bush and the new world order that was prevailing. In January 1989, the Administration pressured the Salvadoran government to negotiate with the FMLN to bring them into the elections that were scheduled for that year.\(^{256}\) The negotiations failed and the right-wing party, ARENA (Nationalist Republican Alliance) won the elections without significant opposition. However, U.S. pressure began to sink in. In September, ARENA officials met with the FMLN in Mexico City. Peace talks continued off and on until October 31, when a bomb attack on a leftist trade union derailed talks.\(^{257}\)

Despite this setback, it was clear that the old Cold War rules that had been laid down by Kennan 50 years prior no longer applied. Calls to support El Salvador despite massive human rights violations to prevent a communist takeover no longer convinced many in the United States. With the threat of aid being cut off, ARENA and the FMLN met again in April 1990. In the U.S., the House of Representatives voted to cut military aid to El Salvador in half on May 22, 1990.\(^{258}\) The Senate would agree on October 19 and Bush would sign the bill on November 5.\(^{259}\) By June 27, 1991 only non-lethal aid would be sent.\(^{260}\) Finally, the government and the FMLN would sign a cease-fire on January 16,

\(^{254}\) Ibid., 70.
\(^{255}\) Ibid., 89.
\(^{256}\) Arnson, 243.
\(^{257}\) Ibid., 244-45.
\(^{258}\) Ibid., 254.
\(^{259}\) Ibid., 256.
\(^{260}\) Ibid., 259.
The involvement of the United States in the Salvadoran civil war clearly shows that America was not concerned about democracy in its Latin America policy, as massive amounts of aid were given to a brutal dictatorship that was murdering its own people. However, the close relationship between that end of the Cold War, and the cut off in U.S. aid show that Cold War fears prompted the intervention, and when that was removed, so was the rationale for aid.

Grenada 1983

The last Cold War intervention was the invasion of Grenada by the United States in 1983. On March 13, 1979, Maurice Bishop of the NJM (New Jewel Movement) overthrew the dictator Sir Eric Gairy. From 1979 until October 1983 Bishop drew very little attention to himself and to Grenada. Carter had no love for the Gairy administration, and made no attempt to try to save his regime. Once in office, Bishop quickly consolidated power, arresting political opponents, closing newspapers, and suspending civil liberties. Grenada had some military and political connections with the Soviet Union, including Cuban assistance on an airport. The runway would be about 10,000 feet, suitable for commercial airliners, its stated purpose, but American military planners also claimed it could be used by Soviet bombers as well. Also disturbing to American officials, was Grenada joining with Cuba in supporting the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan at the United Nations, while other non-aligned nations had either condemned

---

261 Ibid., 263.
263 Ibid., 25.
264 Ibid., 12.
the Soviets or abstained. Some U.S. economic and political pressure was applied to Grenada, but for the most part it was ignored.

However, by October 1983, economic recession had thrown the nation into political anarchy. The turmoil culminated on October 13, 1983 when Bishop was overthrown by an internal coup launched by a rogue faction within the PRG (People’s Revolutionary Government). On October 15, plans were made by the U.S. to try and rescue Bishop and fly him off the island, but nothing came of it. The main fear for the United States was that if Bishop was harmed or continued to be in jeopardy, Cuba might try to intervene to save their ally. It was also possible that Bishop might reciprocate by being more friendly to the U.S. When it became apparent that Bishop had been killed, overt intervention became the top choice. The rescue of Americans on the island would provide a suitable excuse for the invasion, and America would get to rollback a Soviet-aligned state. Finally, America seized its chance and invaded Grenada with 1,900 troops on October 25. The action drew massive criticism from the rest of the world, but by 1984 a moderate government had been installed, and Grenada was back squarely in the Western camp.

Grenada had been nominally aligned with the Soviets for few years before the invasion, and it never had posed an acute enough threat to warrant an invasion before

---

265 Ibid., 25.
266 Ibid., 27-28.
267 Ibid., 14.
268 Ibid, 11.
269 Ibid., 96.
270 Ibid., 97.
271 Ibid., 102-03.
272 Smith P., 181.
1983. Carter made no attempt to stop Bishop’s revolution, and it was not a major concern of the Reagan administration. This shows that it must have been something in October that triggered the invasion. Most likely, Reagan saw his chance to weaken Soviet/Cuban influence in the hemisphere and he took it. Grenada was in chaos, and there was the potential that Cuba might intervene and take control, but more likely the chaos made Grenada an easy target.

There is also a theory that says Reagan invaded Grenada in response to the bombing of Marine barracks in Beirut, that Reagan wanted to send a message of U.S. dominance after the defeat in Lebanon. However, this is unlikely. Although the invasion did take place two days after the bombing, planning for the invasion had taken place days before, and the Task Force that would perform the invasion was sent towards Grenada three days before the attack on October 20. While the attack undoubtedly affected Reagan, the invasion of Grenada was a priority before that.

Overall, U.S. policy during the Cold War was to prevent communism from spreading into the Western Hemisphere. U.S. policymakers were concerned that once a state went communist it would align itself with the Soviet Union and begin spreading revolution elsewhere in the region. As a result, it became American policy to oppose any movement affiliated with the communists and to support any government, no matter how brutal, that opposed communism.

On November 11, 1989 the Berlin Wall fell, and soon after the Cold War

---

273 Ibid., 182.
274 Ibid., 181.
suddenly ended. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the United States faced no other great power that could match or even challenge them militarily. For the first time ever in American history, the U.S. did not have to worry about the militaries of foreign powers. American policy worldwide lost its focus during the 1990s, and its Latin American policy was no exception. We entered what Peter Smith calls the “Age of Uncertainty.” For the most part he is right. U.S. policy post-Cold War as been an ad hoc one, sometimes focusing on drugs like in Colombia, or turmoil and refugee problems like in Haiti. Without the unifying force of security concerns, policy is left up to individual lobbies and interests. Some fight for economic advantages, while other fight for human rights. Without a nation like Imperial Germany or the Soviet Union to challenge us, other motives will shape our policy. Hopefully, the United States will seek to use its power to promote democracy and prosperity for all, rather than succumb to the temptations of power and empire. Only time will tell.

275 Ibid., 108.
276 Arnson, 246.


Works Cited


Guerrant, Edward O. Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor Policy (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1950),

Kamman, William, A Search for Stability: United States Diplomacy Toward Nicaragua

277 Smith P. 217.
1925-1933 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968)


Lowenthal, Abraham F. The Dominican Intervention (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972)


Munro, Dana G., Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy in the Caribbean 1900-1921 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964)


Sigmund, Paul E. The United States and Democracy in Chile (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993)


