

Appendix: U. S. Foreign Policy in Latin America

U.S. is dominant player in region since 1898

- Traditionally exercised a huge influence
 - Even when it wasn't intervening, often perceived to be
- Policy generally not well regarded in hemisphere
- Better relations now than ever, but still skepticism

Prior to 1898, policy less clear

- Support for Spanish Revolutions
- Monroe Doctrine: no colonialism
- Some desire to trade with them
- Skepticism over prospects
- Jefferson: "History furnishes no example of a priest-ridden people maintaining free civil government"
- Manifest Destiny and territorial expansion
- 1846-8: Mexican-American War (and subsequent debate over citizenship)
- consistent talk of annexing Cuba and Baja
- Rivalry with England
- Gradual dominance over Caribbean
- Ultimate dominance over South America

Five familiar explanations for U.S policy

- Geopolitics
 - U.S. trying to defend itself against perceived threats to national security
 - European rivalry
 - WWII
 - Cold War
- Economic interests
 - Interests of U.S. as a whole
 - Interests of businesses, capitalism
 - Interests of specific individuals
- Domestic politics
 - U.S. foreign policy just reflects domestic constituencies
 - Cuban policy today
 - Impact of L.A. immigration?
- Ideology
 - Promoting democracy
 - Combating Communism
 - Discussed a lot; is it just a veil for other interests (e.g., economic interests)?
 - Or is it sincere (e.g., intervention in Haiti)?
- Bureaucratic politics
 - Not one policy
 - People, agencies jockey for power and influence within government
 - Very important to note that policy is not coherent
 - Conspiracy theory explanations vs. general incoherence explanations

People really differ in which of these seems most important

- Latin Americans: economic issues key; all else is a guise or façade
- U.S. policymakers would insist on primacy of national interest
- U.S. citizens probably think in terms of ideology and democracy

Also, drivers of policy have changed a lot over time

- Four phases

Modern period begins in 1898. Why?

- U.S. "liberates" or inherits Spanish colonial possessions
- Becomes the hegemonic force in the Caribbean basin
- Puerto Rico becomes a U.S. colony
- Cuba and Nicaragua turned into virtual colonies
- U.S. also starts to play a larger role in South America, where British are dominant
 - By 1920s, annual U.S. investment in region exceeds British
 - Though U.S. still smaller total fixed investment until WWII

First phase: Era of Imperialism: 1898-1932

- Why called imperialism? [They called it that]
- Europe rushing to gain colonies; U.S. does the same, often using the language of "Manifest Destiny": the U.S. was destined to be light to the underdeveloped regions of the hemisphere and save them from much worse European imperialism
- As Senator Albert Jeremiah Beveridge put it at the turn of the century: "The time will come in the not-so-distant future when American enterprise will extend across the entire northern if not the entire southern continent...Our institutions will follow, and American laws, American civilization, & the American flag will plant themselves on shores hitherto bloody & benighted, by those agents of God henceforth made beautiful & bright."
- Period of Dollar Diplomacy
- Goal is to make money
- Investments, trade, loans
- Also called the period of Gunboat Diplomacy, with U.S. military interventions in Caribbean Basin to protect American interests and investments
- Nicaragua, 1912-25
- Haiti, 1914-34
- Dominican Republic, 1916-24
- Cuba, 1917-23
- Panama
- Mexico, 1914 and 1916
- Motivations for these interventions was often quite naked
- General Smedley Butler, who headed most of the interventions in the area, wrote a memoir of his adventures in the 1930s where he described himself as "a racketeer for Capitalism" and "a high-class muscle man for big business, Wall Street, and the bankers."
- "I brought light to the Dominican Republic on behalf of the international investment house of Brown Brothers Harriman in 1906. I Haiti 'right' for sugar interests in 1914."
- This was much in keeping with the spirit of the times, when governments supported banks and private companies in their efforts to make money abroad
- Wilson had a different vision of the region
- Hemisphere of free-trading, liberal democracies
- Respect for the rule of law; multilateral internationalism
- Twisted in practice; gives way to unilateral U.S. military intervention

Second phase: Depression and the Good Neighbor Policy, 1930-1948

- Costs of intervention mounting
- Especially in Nicaragua, where U.S. fighting a real guerrilla war
- With Depression, national mood hardly favors using American troops to bail out big businesses or bankers
- Hoover not given to intervention
- New policy accelerates under Roosevelt
 - Progressive administration
 - Ominous events in Europe
 - World War II begins to loom
- Effects are varied
- Toleration of increasing leftism in Mexico, including oil nationalization
- Creation of "National Guards" to take place of U.S. troops
 - Invariably leads to the establishment of a dictatorship under the person in charge of the National Guard (Nicaragua, Cuba, etc.)
- Accomplishes main goal of support during WWII
 - Most countries join war or at least break off relations with Germany
 - Brazil sides with allies
 - Others remain neutral, even Argentina (though with Axis sympathies)
- U.S. then supports the big wave of democracy and reform that occurs after WWII
- E.g., Brazilian military, which had served in Italy with Allies, overthrows Vargas
- But U.S. support or democratization gives way rapidly to Cold War rivalry and threat of Communism aided by Soviet Union

Third phase: Cold War: 1948-1989

- U.S. becomes suspicious of attempts at social reform
- World seen as a giant political chessboard
- Real fear of subversion; some attempts by Communists to seize power (e.g., Costa Rica)
- But also tremendous hypersensitivity
 - Geostrategic threat
 - Opposition to nationalization of U.S. firms
 - Fear that attempts at reform could hurt stable (undemocratic) allies
- General view is that democracy and reform are good things in principle, but that they may be dangerous in practice
- George Kennan, liberal architect of post-war world, in speech to American Ambassadors in the region in 1950: "The Final answer may be an unpleasant one, but...we should not hesitate before police repression by the local government...It is better to have a strong regime in power than a liberal government if it is indulgent and relaxed and penetrated by Communists."
- Allen Dulles, Director of CIA under Eisenhower, even more frank: "The world is divided into two types of people: the Christian anti-communists, and the others"
- Policy leads to a series of interventions
 - 1954: CIA-sponsored coup in Guatemala overthrows leftist government
 - 1961: Failed Bay of Pigs intervention in Cuba to unseat Fidel Castro
 - 1964: Military coup in Brazil against left-leaning government
 - 1965: OAS-sponsored military intervention in Dominican Republic to prevent military victory of reformists over military
 - 1973: Overthrow of democratically-elected Socialist government of Salvador Allende
 - 1979: Grenadan Revolution
 - 1980s: In response to revolution in Nicaragua and revolutionary movements in El Salvador and Guatemala, proxy wars and military assistance. Includes both right-

wing rebels in Nicaragua and very repressive military-dominated regimes in El Salvador and Guatemala

- Bouts of reformism under Democratic administrations in the U.S.
- Support for social democracy in Costa Rica in 1948
 - Alliance for Progress in early 1960s
 - Human rights policy under Jimmy Carter
 - Tolerance of leftist-nationalist governments in Mexico
- But when push comes to shove, U.S tends to support right-wing dictatorships in the face of a Communist threat
- Alliance for Progress turns to military aid
- Carter favors intervention in Nicaragua and military aid in Salvador

International economic policy

- Debt Crisis really puts Latin America on U.S. financial radar screen in 1980s
- Support for neoliberal economic reforms
- Negotiation of debt relief
- Presages 1990s, when economic issues and international cooperation come to the fore

Fourth Phase: Era of Globalization (1989-present)

- Overthrow of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, reduction of international tensions, and finally break-up of Soviet Union
- Communism now no longer a threat; anti-communism not a policy that makes any sense
- Greater tolerance of reformism
- Strong support for new democracies
 - Central American peace accords, which lead to democratization of Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala
 - Endorsement of political transition in Mexico
 - Behind-the-scenes maneuvering to foil coups in Guatemala and Paraguay
 - Rejection of coup in Ecuador; force return to democratic elections recently
 - Direct military intervention to restore democracy in Panama and Haiti
- Basically, though, the U.S. fails to seize the moment to create Wilson's vision
 - ambivalent of trade; FTAA fails to develop
 - drug certification continues past 2002
 - Some progress on hemispheric integration and establishment of multilateral efforts
- Once again, some important differences between Democratic and Republican administrations
 - Clinton refuses to be baited by Chávez; Bush II appears to support coup
 - Clinton administration explores more open relations with Cuba; Bush II administration accuses it of developing biological weapons
 - Clinton administration favors restrained approach to Colombia, sensitive to issues of human rights; Bush II removes human rights restrictions and steps up counterinsurgency assistance
 - Clinton administration pushes multilateral initiatives and launches Summit of the Americas; these initiatives are generally resisted by Republicans on the Hill

Summing up

Variation across eras

- Imperialist Era, economic interests dominant and often quite naked
- Good Neighbor Policy: geopolitics important
- Cold War, geopolitics most important, but often satisfied; economics and ideology important; naked economic interest varies
- Globalization: geostrategic concerns not an issue; economics and democracy promotion important; naked economic interest less clear
- Bureaucratic politics important when there is no crisis

Substantial variation by Administration (Democrats vs. Republicans)

- Emphasis on democracy
- Nature of economic concerns and degree to which they influence policy
- Likely to continue in the future
- Overall, though, big trends depend on international context