

LATIN AMERICAN STRATEGIES AGAINST US INTERVENTION

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INTRODUCTION

The chill that has now descended on US-Cuban relations was caused by a cold wind from the North. The Cuban government demonstrated remarkable restraint since the advent of Donald Trump, refusing to respond to his provocative tweets about the death of Fidel Castro, and not engaging in escalatory retaliation as the Trump administration has cracked down on travel and diplomatic activity. "With God's help, a free Cuba is what we will soon achieve", President Donald Trump told a cheering crowd of Cuban-Americans in Miami, announcing that "I am canceling the last administration's completely one-sided deal with Cuba" (Mazzei and Gámez Torres, 2017).

Even though he did not follow through with a complete reversal or close the embassy entirely, Trump is an unpredictable, impulsive leader who not only says outlandish things in foreign policy, like the remark about a "military option" in Venezuela, but is capable of doing outlandish things, as we saw with his recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. And of course his words alone can have consequences, as we saw when he perhaps unwittingly gave the green light for Saudi Arabia to blockade Qatar, only to have to send his then-Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to the region to undo the damage, along with a sale of fighter jets for the Qataris. Launching a trade war with tariffs on steel and aluminum when his experts tell him the international response will surely damage the US economy is another example. Whatever we may judge to be in the national interest of the United States that will not necessarily correlate with what the Trump administration will do.

This means Trump has to be restrained. Among rational people in Washington, the hope has been that the childlike president will be restrained by what are often called "the adults in the room", but we know this is an illusion. We know that former Secretary of State Tillerson lost all influence long before the president fired him. We know that National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster is capable of joining the madness, as in his claim that North Korea cannot be deterred so it

must be confronted. We know that Chief of Staff John F. Kelly can't get Trump to stop tweeting lies and often reminds people that he's the Chief of Staff, not the Chief of Trump. And we know that Defense Secretary James Mattis, for all his alleged independence and gravitas, could not stop Trump from recognizing Jerusalem, withdrawing from the Paris Climate Accord, or decertifying Iran's compliance with the joint nuclear agreement.

THE MONROE DOCTRINE IS RELEVANT TODAY

So we cannot count on self-regulation by the Trump team. And that is worrisome at a time of increasing pressure on Cuba and Trump's reassertion of the right to intervene in Latin America. His instincts were reinforced rather than restrained by Secretary Tillerson's major speech on Latin America in 2018. Before undertaking a six-country tour of the region, Tillerson spoke in Austin, Texas. He began his speech with a little joke by quoting former president Lyndon B. Johnson, who once complained about elitism in foreign policy. "I don't believe I'll ever get credit for anything I do in foreign affairs, no matter how successful it is, because I didn't go to Harvard," Johnson had said. Tillerson then added, "I didn't either." (Tillerson, 2018) That got him applause from the crowd at the University of Texas, but it should have raised the obvious question: what should LBJ have gotten credit for? Sending young men to kill and die in Vietnam when he knew it was hopeless? Invading the Dominican Republic on false pretenses? Supporting a military coup in Brazil?

Tillerson then proclaimed that the Monroe Doctrine is "as relevant today as it was the day it was written." He invoked President Theodore Roosevelt's visit to Panama, which too many Latin Americans symbolizes the first covert operation for regime change of the 20th century, when Washington conspired to tear the province of Panama away from Colombia. Tillerson echoed President John F. Kennedy's promise to "eliminate tyranny" from the hemisphere, a pledge that has unfortunate resonance also, since Kennedy made use of economic warfare, assassination attempts, and invasion to try to eliminate what he called "tyranny" from Cuba. Tillerson also denounced China and Russia for their growing presence in the hemisphere, arguing implicitly that the United States is the only natural partner for Latin American countries. Of the Monroe Doctrine, the Secretary said: "It clearly has been a success" (Tillerson, 2018).

The Monroe Doctrine has rankled in Latin America for two centuries. Mexico refused to join the League of Nations because its charter incorporated the Monroe Doctrine. Diplomats and jurists in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay tried unsuccessfully for decades to persuade the United States to convert it from a unilater-

al claim of hemispheric dominance into a multilateral, mutual security agreement among sovereign equals (Scarfi, 2017). The dispute came to a head at an inter-American conference in Montevideo in 1933. "This doctrine bothers, disunites and hurts us," said Mexico's Foreign Secretary José Manuel Puig Casauranc. "As long as something is not the result of a reciprocal arrangement or obligation, even if it is a favor, it bothers and humiliates" (Scarfi, 2017: 154). In an effort to hem in US unilateralism, the Montevideo conference passed a resolution declaring that "no state has the right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of another." That declaration became the core of Franklin Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy, a rare period of inter-American respect made possible by Washington's restraint.

Barack Obama's efforts to follow the Good Neighbor tradition, beginning with the opening in Cuban-US relations, brought accolades and cheering crowds from Havana to Buenos Aires. Now, in the context of Trump's boasting in his State of the Union speech of having increased pressure on Cuba and Venezuela for regime change, and his earlier remark that he was preparing a "military option" for Venezuela, Tillerson's speech suggested that the President's interventionist instincts would not be restrained by his chief diplomat. Referring to China and Russia, Tillerson concluded that "Latin America does not need new imperial powers." (Tillerson, 2018) But his resurrection of the specter of Monroe, wittingly or not, signaled that he might prefer a return to the old one.

That signal did not lose strength when Tillerson was fired a few weeks later. His replacement, Mike Pompeo, had been a hardliner on Cuba while a member of Congress, and as CIA Director he invited veterans from the Cuban exile brigade that invaded the Bay of Pigs to visit CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia. He blamed Cuba for interfering in US politics, and urged Obama to reject Raul Castro's request for the return of Guantánamo to Cuba. In response to the opening announced in December 2014, Pompeo denounced the policy as "strengthening a dictatorial regime" and "cozying up to our enemies." (Pompeo, 2014) Where Tillerson ineffectively tried to moderate Trump's most bellicose instincts on Iran and North Korea, Pompeo shares Trump's hawkish orientation. If anything, the changes in the administration are likely to bring an even harder line than we have seen so far.

So I'd like to focus on another way that the United States has been constrained in the past from intervening in Latin America by coalitions of Latin American states themselves. If we think about two historical periods when the US broke with its traditional approach of violating Latin American sovereignty, the presidencies of Franklin Roosevelt and Barack Obama, in each case we can see that this was not a kind of gift made by a more enlightened US president, but in fact was the combination of years of Latin American diplomatic resistance

that encountered a US administration able to count costs. This diplomatic resistance took the form of “soft balancing”.

The term soft balancing was coined by political scientist Robert Pape in 2003 to describe opposition to the invasion of Iraq, when France, Germany and Russia joined at the United Nations to try to thwart Washington’s plans (Pape, 2003). In traditional balance of power theory, states seek to check the preponderant state either through enhancing their own power or by forming alliances based on military and economic resources.

In a unipolar system, the leading state’s power is unrivaled, so traditional balancing can’t work: no coalition of other states can bring together enough military or economic power to resist the hegemon. So, secondary states turn to soft balancing through diplomacy in international institutions, emphasizing international law, using delegitimization and reinforcing international norms. These coordinated actions raise the costs and lower the benefits of the unilateral exercise of military force.

Pape and other political scientists have discussed soft balancing as a twenty-first century innovation, or at least something that happened after the end of the Cold War, when the US became the world’s unrivalled superpower. But it has happened earlier in the inter-American system, where the US has been an unrivalled regional superpower for more than a century (Friedman and Long, 2015).

Of course the most sustained kind of resistance to US power in the twentieth century has been from Cuba itself, which was the target of the most sustained US effort at regime change in history. The very fact of Cuban survival in spite of invasion, assassination attempts, and economic warfare is an example of successful resistance by a highly mobilized and unbending society. But the Cuban model is not the only way the US has been constrained in the past.

After the War of 1898 and Theodore Roosevelt’s doctrine asserting the unrestricted right to unilateral intervention, three decades of gunboat diplomacy to collect debts, and Dollar Diplomacy with its prolonged military occupations of the Caribbean Basin by the US Marines, raised concerns throughout Latin America.

Many diplomats and jurists in Argentina, then one of the world’s wealthiest nations, saw their country as a counterweight to US dominance. Though they were far from the line of fire, interventionism indirectly threatened Argentine interests and established unwelcome precedents for a nation with foreign debts. They did not challenge the US on the battlefield. Instead, Argentina’s most famous international jurist-diplomats, Carlos Calvo (1824-1906) and Luis María Drago (1859-1921), promoted formal doctrines designed to constrain the great powers from violating the national sovereignty of weaker powers by using force to collect debts. Gunboat diplomacy practiced by the great powers made the rights of foreign capital an existential question for Latin American debtor nations, including

Argentina. Argentine thinkers had been wrestling for some time with the need to simultaneously preserve inflows of foreign capital while protecting weaker Latin American states from the power of the investors’ home governments when disputes arose. As early as the 1860s, Carlos Calvo began to campaign for an absolute prohibition on diplomatic or military intervention for debt collection. At a time when most European countries and the United States promulgated a doctrine of diplomatic protection that held that their nationals were entitled to preferential treatment and effective extraterritorial sovereignty, Calvo argued that parties that develop grievances in the course of doing business in a foreign country must seek redress through that country’s judicial system rather than turning to their home governments for satisfaction (Calvo, 1868).

Although the Calvo Doctrine did not find formal acceptance in international law, Argentine diplomats followed Calvo by continuing to press for the adoption of new norms to constrain the great powers—in increasingly directed specifically at balancing the United States—in international venues. Secretary of State James Blaine launched the First Pan-American Conference in 1889 to try to create a customs union and system of arbitration in Latin America, both under US leadership. The Argentine delegation, led by future president Roque Sáenz Peña, was successful in rallying Latin American support to block the US projects, and pressed, over US objections, its own resolutions prohibiting territorial conquest and asserting the juridical equality of states (Morgenfeld, 2011).

At the Second Pan-American Conference in 1902-03, Argentina submitted a version of the Calvo Doctrine, prohibiting extraterritorial intervention (diplomatic or military) to resolve pecuniary disputes and holding that natives and foreigners were equal before the law. By articulating a concern widespread in Latin America and persuasively lobbying the other delegations, the Argentines succeeded in isolating the United States: every delegation present signed the resolution except the United States and Haiti.

The confrontation between Argentina and the United States came into sharp relief in the same period over the Venezuela crisis. In 1902-03, a joint naval force sponsored by Germany, Great Britain, and Italy shelled and occupied Venezuelan ports after the Venezuelan government fell behind on loan payments during its civil war. The events provoked outrage in Argentina; as its leading daily *La Nación* editorialized, the attack was “a latent aggression against any of the nations that have grown from the same cradle. Today you, tomorrow me” (Guerra Iniguez *et al.*, 1976: 19). While belatedly objecting to European intervention, President Theodore Roosevelt articulated a special US right to intervene, to exercise “international police power” in the hemisphere, in what came to be known as the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. Roosevelt’s motto “speak softly but carry a big stick” acquired new resonance for Latin Americans, who thought

the big stick was aimed at them. Their fears seemed realized when Roosevelt, dissatisfied with Colombian demands in negotiating rights to an isthmian canal, helped revolutionaries break Panama away from Colombia in 1903. The Roosevelt Corollary and the interventions in Panama, Cuba (1906), and the Dominican Republic (1905), where the United States set up a customs receivership to ensure foreign investors would be first in line for any government revenues, confirmed Latin American concerns. Marshaling Latin American opposition, Foreign Minister Drago wrote a message to the Roosevelt administration calling for an absolute prohibition on military intervention in “the territory of American nations” (Drago, 1903).

The contrasting visions of appropriate behavior of states clashed visibly in international forums. At the Third Pan-American Conference in 1906, Argentina sought the adoption of the Drago Doctrine forbidding military intervention, but the United States managed to thwart the resolution. At the Second Peace Conference at The Hague in 1907, the Argentine delegation and The US position was not to reject the Drago Doctrine outright, but to embrace it with fingers crossed. The US and U.K. delegations joined forces to amend his doctrine with a major loophole. Where Drago had spoken of public debt and an absolute prohibition on military force, the amended version pushed through by US delegate Col. Horace Porter referred only to contractual debts and called for compulsory arbitration —after which noncompliance by the debtor nation could be punished by military action. Argentina registered two formal reservations, calling for disputes over contractual debts not to be submitted to international arbitration but to go before national courts, and stating that public loans cannot in any circumstances give rise to military aggression. The “Porter Doctrine” that supplanted Drago at The Hague immediately sparked a clash with Latin American countries over representation at the International Court of Justice, which the United States and Great Britain sought to dominate, and where Argentina, Brazil, and other Latin American states demanded equal representation —not only on the principle of the juridical equality of states, but to ward off the possibility that the international body would become merely one more instrument for future intervention.

One might consider the Argentine exercise in soft balancing a failure, given the Porter Doctrine’s evisceration of the Drago Doctrine. But by taking a longer view, one can see the seeds planted by Calvo and Drago, and the consistent tradition in Argentine foreign policy of pushing back against US projects of hemispheric integration under its leadership, growing and bearing fruit. The Latin American countries that joined Argentina in expressing reservations along similar lines at The Hague included Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Peru, and Uruguay. Having failed to persuade the entire conference to go along, Latin American governments

began taking matters into their own hands, changing by national law the international norms on intervention within the Americas. They incorporated Calvo’s principles into the language of contracts with foreign corporations, legal statutes, or even their constitutions in the form of the so-called Calvo Clause, requiring parties doing business under those laws or contracts to agree to be bound by the host country’s judicial system. (Among the countries that at one point included a version of the Calvo Doctrine in their constitutions are Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela.) Foreigners who wanted to do business in those countries had to agree to the new terms restoring national sovereignty over international capital or look elsewhere for investment opportunities (Newcombe and Paradell, 2009). Argentina, along with numerous Latin American supporters, advanced international norms with far-reaching effects beyond what could be traced in the letter of international law. As renowned newspaper editor William Stead put it in 1908, Drago was “the one man” who had “permanently changed” international relations through international law, making his name “deservedly famous around the world” (Guerra Iniguez *et al.*, 1976: 9). At this early date, the Argentine strategy of rallying multinational opposition to unilateral intervention through international organizations had borne fruit. These were not direct confrontations or military victories over the United States, but they limited US freedom of action. As the Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío wrote, “On the balance scales of the American continent, it is the Argentine Republic that gives us the counterweight to Yankee power” (Darío, 1911: 3).

Argentina then gained the backing of revolutionary Mexico. Venustiano Carranza not only presided over the development of Mexico’s anti-interventionist Constitution, but issued what came to be known as the Carranza Doctrine in 1918. This Doctrine held that all nations are equal under the law, which meant that there could be no legitimate intervention with any exceptions. Nationals and foreigners are also equal under the law and subject to the sovereignty of the state where they reside, meaning there could be no extraterritoriality or special protections for foreign investors. At a series of Pan-American conferences, an increasingly large and coherent coalition of Latin American states joined Argentina and Mexico, despite the many conflicts and resentments and ideological differences among them, in a strategy of soft balancing, to demand that the United States give up its self-proclaimed right to intervene (Friedman and Long, 2015).

By 1930, Mexican Foreign Secretary Genaro Estrada extended the goal from nonintervention to noninterference by declaring that Mexico would no longer recognize or make judgments about the nature of foreign governments, whether they come to power legally or extra legally (Jessup, 1931).

The “Estrada Doctrine” was invoked by other countries following the model. Carranza’s former foreign secretary Isidro Fabela, an advisor to the Mexi-

can Foreign Ministry, wrote that there was no need to “turn Mexico into a Quijote country that seizes any opportunity to challenge the political wrongs committed by North America against our Republics of the South,” especially since Mexico lacked the power on its own to become the protector of the oppressed. Nonetheless, Fabela argued, Mexico did have “a noble and transcendent mission” to continue an independent foreign policy and to express its ideas freely (Fabela, 1936).

Franklin Roosevelt’s predecessor already understood that US policy was counterproductive. President Herbert Hoover’s interest in Latin America went further than the Republican presidents who preceded him. As secretary of commerce in the early 1920s, Hoover promoted Latin American trade and investment. After his election as president, he devoted ten weeks of the transition period before his inauguration touring the region, giving twenty-five speeches promising to reduce US interference in Latin American affairs. He was surprised at the level of criticism he encountered, from demonstrations to challenges from government officials. President Hipólito Yrigoyen of Argentina was most direct. At a banquet for Hoover, Yrigoyen warned that US power risked becoming “a danger to justice... a shadow projected upon the sovereignty of the other states.” In a private meeting, the Argentine president startled Hoover into a brief silence by stating that US intervention on behalf of its citizens’ financial claims had rendered US investment hazardous to national sovereignty (Yrigoyen, 1956: 111-115).

Hoover listened. As an Argentine diplomat put it, the president-elect displayed “a lively interest in learning the reasons for this antipathy toward the United States—an interest based in the desire to remove the causes that motivate it” (De Estrada, 1928). Hoover sought to wind down the US occupations in the Caribbean in part because of the sheer financial cost of equipping an expeditionary force at a time when the Great Depression and the Republican philosophy of frugal government expenditures put a strain on the federal budget. It is significant, however, to recognize how aware he was of the reputational cost to the United States of maintaining military occupations. Domestic critics voiced opposition in the press and in Congress. So did anti-imperialist and nongovernmental peace organizations in the United States and Latin America. Hoover knew that before his own good will tour, Latin American delegations to the inter-American conference held at Havana in 1928 had protested the occupations. Argentina, Mexico, and El Salvador introduced a resolution stating that “no state has the right to intervene in the internal affairs of another.” The US delegation under President Calvin Coolidge’s secretary of state, Charles Evans Hughes, blocked the resolution, reserving the right to intervene to protect lives and property. That made the conference a failure, one of the reasons Hoover placed improving inter-American relations high on his agenda. Hoover’s secretary of state, Henry Stimson, observed in a 1931 radio broadcast that “sore spots” in US-Latin American relations “have damaged

our good name, our credit, and our trade far beyond the apprehension of our own people,” and claimed progress in the US effort “to eradicate the sore spots of Latin-American diplomacy” (DeConde, 1951: 62).

Thus before Franklin Roosevelt took office, many currents were already guiding the United States away from its traditionally unilateral interventionist approach to Latin America. Argentina, Mexico, and other Latin American countries had pushed for decades for a formal prohibition on intervention. The Great Depression made more onerous the costs of stationing Marines in restive countries, and the rise of local dictators made the Marines superfluous. Herbert Hoover was beginning to draw these threads together when he reached the end of his single term in office.

Franklin Roosevelt had gone through his own evolution in thinking about Latin America. As Woodrow Wilson’s assistant secretary of the navy, he shared his boss’s condescending view of Latin Americans as unprepared for self-government, and spoke in favor of a strong US military presence in the Caribbean. By 1928, he had changed his mind. He published an article in *Foreign Affairs* that acknowledged Latin American resentment of unilateral US intervention and argued that any military action should be taken in cooperation with Latin American nations (Gellman, 1979).

In the first months of his administration, Roosevelt made evident in his statements and his appointments that he intended to make a definitive change. He announced the new policy in general and specific terms. In his first inaugural address on March 4, 1933, Roosevelt said, “In the field of world policy I would dedicate this Nation to the policy of the good neighbor—the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the sanctity of his agreements in and with a world of neighbors” (Rosenman, 1938-1950 2:11-16). In a speech on April 12 marking “Pan-American Day,” Roosevelt said, “Your Americanism and mine must be a structure built of confidence, cemented by a sympathy which recognizes only equality and fraternity” (Rosenman, 1938-1950, 2: 129-33).

Meanwhile he appointed as secretary of state Senator Cordell Hull (D-TN), whose main virtue was his prestige among Southern Democrats, not any particular experience in Latin America. However, Roosevelt reached beyond Hull to make a critical appointment at the subcabinet level, choosing Sumner Welles to be his key diplomat on Latin American affairs and the architect of the Good Neighbor Policy. After an assignment in 1919 in Buenos Aires, where he overlapped with Yrigoyen’s first term in office, in 1922 Welles went on a special mission as Commissioner to the Dominican Republic to investigate how to end the US occupation. In his two-volume history of that country, *Naboth’s Vineyard*, Welles argued that the Dominican Republic could govern itself, despite traditional US assumptions about Dominican “immaturity” or the influence of foreign powers. US mili-

tary occupation, Welles wrote, generated resistance rather than pro-US sentiment or economic development, and he bemoaned US officials' ignorance of local customs and wishes. Instead of occupation, Welles argued, "friendly cooperation and intercourse" with the American Republics would assure "the future safeguard" of the United States (Welles, 1928: 936-7). Ironically, Welles was responsible for the single worst violation of the Good Neighbor Policy. Sent on a mission to Cuba in 1933, Welles veered back toward interventionism when, following the ouster of President Gerardo Machado y Morales, he advised against recognition of the revolutionary government and requested the stationing of US warships in Cuban waters. He even called for the landing of troops, a request Roosevelt rejected. Welles's actions made him persona non grata in Cuba and led to his recall in December 1933.

The incident confirmed Roosevelt's determination to avoid unilateral intervention. Thereafter, Welles was unerring in helping Roosevelt to deepen the meaning of the Good Neighbor Policy. He encouraged Roosevelt to remove the last US forces from Haiti in 1934 and to abrogate the Platt Amendment. At his insistence, the State Department officially abandoned its use of non-recognition as a diplomatic sanction. In 1934, Welles instigated the cancellation of the non-recognition treaty that since 1923 had bound the United States and Central American nations not to grant diplomatic recognitions to governments that came to power by force. In April 1936, Welles went further, instructing diplomats in Central America to "decline comment" and "abstain from offering advice on any domestic question," even should their counsel be sought by local politicians (Wood, 1961: 145-147). The Roosevelt administration thereby adopted the same standard as Mexico's Estrada Doctrine: governments would be recognized because they held power, not because of how they came to power. This policy rested on the idea that sovereignty lay in the state, not the government. It placed the non-intervention principle on a higher level than the imperative to support pro-United States political candidates or to promote democratic rule abroad. And it meant that US diplomats, formerly seen as kingmakers, would remain neutral in Latin American politics. Even after Nicaraguan strongman Anastasio Somoza murdered the rebel leader Sandino, Welles refused a request from the US ambassador to withdraw recognition from Nicaragua (Gellman, 1979: 31).

All this went a long way to respond to Latin American pressure to move from a policy of interventionism to a policy of non interventionism. As Greg Grandin put it, Latin American actors developed the Good Neighbor's core principle of nonintervention, which "represented the central plank in a long-evolving effort by Latin American jurists to remake the philosophical foundations of international law" (Grandin, 2006: 1053). Indeed, continuing Mexican and Argentine cooperation led to the 1933 Montevideo Conference adopting the anti-interventionist

pronouncement that "no state has the right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of another." Breaking with precedent, Secretary of State Cordell Hull signed the resolution. However, he presented reservations, arguing that intervention was not defined, so the United States would continue to pursue its own policy. Over the next few years, Mexico and Argentina worked together to rally other countries behind a pressure campaign to see the resolution strengthened. Then at the Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Peace held at Buenos Aires in 1936, with President Roosevelt himself in attendance (a strong signal of the event's importance), the United States relinquished its caveats. The conference protocol the US signed minced no words: the signatories "declare inadmissible the intervention of any one of them, directly or indirectly, and for whatever reason, in the internal or external affairs of any other of the Parties" (Burr and Hussey, 1955: 112-114). Instead, external threats to the hemisphere would be answered through mutual consultation and cooperation. In effect, this culminated three decades of struggle that brought about the era of the Good Neighbor Policy, which despite its flaws and inconsistencies (notably in Cuba) did see the United States formally give up its claimed right to violate the sovereignty of Latin American nations.

To be sure, Roosevelt wanted to save money during the Great Depression, and worked with dictators to keep order after the Marines left. An additional factor enabled a shift from intervention to non-intervention in US policy in the region: it was possible to remove the Marines from occupation duty because there were no other forces that could do what they had been doing in their place (LaFeber, 1983). The departing Marines did not abandon their posts before training and equipping domestic armed forces, the *guardias nacionales*, that could put down unrest in their absence. Trained along Progressive lines to be efficient, professional forces that would remain above politics, the Guardias Nacionales quickly became the route to rule for authoritarian military officers. Throughout Central America and the Caribbean, US-backed dictatorships seized power and maintained order on their own. Héctor Pérez-Brignoli made this point by reeling off the names of the dictators of Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba: "Somoza, Ubico, Hernández Martínez and Carías were, like Trujillo and Batista, better guarantors of the *Pax Americana* than the Marines themselves." (Pérez-Brignoli 1985: 98) This may understate the degree to which Latin American dictators pursued their own agendas within the limits of an asymmetrical relationship with the United States, but it does point to an aspect of the Good Neighbor era that was anything but progressive. Nonetheless, the soft balancing strategy led by Argentina and Mexico is the underappreciated Latin American origin of the Good Neighbor policy's ban on US intervention.

People assembled today at this conference know better than anyone that unilateral US intervention did not end, from Guatemala in 1954 and the invasion at Playa Girón to the invasions of the Dominican Republic and Grenada and Panama, from Operation Mongoose and the embargo to the assault on Allende's Chile, the Contra war in Nicaragua, et cetera. Soft balancing was not a permanent condition. Indeed, it was the unilateralism and extraterritoriality in the Cuba embargo that most angered Latin American states in recent years. Multilateral sanctions against Cuba, imposed by the Organization of American States in 1964, started to break down a decade later. After the Cold War ended, efforts reemerged to undermine the US position. Starting with the Iberoamerican summits, Cuba was invited to regional gatherings. The rise of a new Latin American left at the turn of the century sharpened opposition to US policy. South American states led the creation of political and economic institutions that limited Washington's reach, like UNASUR and CELAC. At an inter-American summit meeting in Cartagena in 2012, US citizens paid attention to a mini-scandal about members of the Secret Service who were hiring prostitutes.

More importantly, Latin American delegations, including the then increasing prestigious Brazilian government, united to denounce Cuba's exclusion from the Summit. Obama came back from Cartagena licking his wounds—and asked his aides what could be done to improve relations with the region. They settled on a dramatic move on Cuba—a tall order, given the American political landscape, but a necessary one. Obama faced the prospect of addressing empty chairs at the Panama summit if his administration did not agree to Cuban participation (Hershberg, 2016). US efforts to isolate Cuba had resulted, paradoxically, in the diplomatic isolation of the United States—further highlighted by the lopsided annual votes in the United Nations General Assembly to lift the embargo. Latin American diplomatic opposition showed the way out of the corner into which Washington had painted itself. It is called the Obamapertura but like the Good Neighbor Policy, it has Latin American roots, including years of diplomatic efforts by states in the region aimed at counterbalancing the interventionist US policy with multilateral coalition-building. That kind of soft balancing is the underappreciated Latin American origin of the Obama opening to Cuba.

Whether we are discussing the Franklin Roosevelt administration or the Obama administration, Latin American pressure meets with success when there is an amenable leadership in Washington. Clearly, we are not there now. However, the lesson is still an important one: when Latin Americans unite against US intervention, they can have a real effect in spite of the power imbalance. Outside of Mexico and Central America, Latin American states today depend considerably less on the United States than in the past. In the commercial sphere and in access to investment, China and Europe offer alternatives. The rise of new cen-

ters of power in the world is important because it expands Latin American leaders' options. Latin American solidarity with Cuba and confrontation with the US have recently diminished with the rightward tendency in the region. The current leaders of key states who are trying to work with Trump, from Argentina's Macri to Brazil's Temer and former Peru's Kuczynski, are not going to lead a coalition of resistance. But they are unlikely to be in perfect alignment with Trump either. For one thing, their strategies for economic growth and the resulting political legitimacy they hoped to gain depended on winning increased access to the US market. Trump's protectionism has left his most obvious natural allies in Latin America perplexed and pursuing alternatives in Europe and Asia (Rapoport and Morgenfeld, 2017). Faced with the growing Chinese challenge as well as orchestrated and effective Latin American criticism, Obama tried using free trade deals and diplomatic concessions to stanch the bleeding in inter-American relations. But Trump, who disdains both diplomacy and free trade, has given up both principal instruments for evoking cooperation. Solidarity with Cuba is still present in Latin American societies, and with elections coming in the next two years all over the region, it is possible that history will repeat itself in seeing a more independent-minded Latin American coalition pull together to balance the United States and find ways to raise the costs of intervention. As Trump revives the Monroe Doctrine's unilateralism and continues his insults against Latinos, he may not "make America great again," but he will probably manage to "make Latin America irate again" (Friedman, 2017).

Trump's own policies and rhetoric are the single most important factor driving future Latin American solidarity.

CONCLUSION

My point is this: where Latin American states have been able to cooperate to constrain the US, it has been through multilateral diplomacy coming together in international organizations, even those where the United States wields influence and even those that may produce resolutions and actions with which Cuba strongly disagrees. Soft balancing works by producing the maximum amount of coordination around the minimum set of mutually acceptable positions among Latin American states. Especially when the United States behaves badly, the potential for international engagement in Latin America is more important than ever.

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