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Latin America in
International Politics:
Challenging US Hegemony

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How Latin America Sees the World

This project actually began fifty years ago when, as a graduate student, I audited a course on hemispheric relations taught by Ernest R. May. As an undergraduate, I had done some work on the Venezuelan boundary dispute with Great Britain in the nineteenth century and had come to Harvard to study diplomatic history with May. May was not a specialist on Latin America; he offered to teach the course just once as part of an effort to expand Harvard College's offerings on Latin America. He put himself through a crash course on Latin American history and fit what he learned into his own framework of how to understand international relations. In that course and in our many conversations afterward, May left me with two ideas about inter-American relations that have affected my reading and writing on the subject over the years. He also instilled in me a powerful interest in international relations theory, not typical of historians at that time. May saw theory as a source of ideas that might be fruitful and urged students of international affairs to be eclectic in using theory to explain events rather than tie themselves to a single approach into which empirical events had to be squeezed.

The first idea he left me with was that nations and national leaders might have differing perspectives on the world and that these differences, irrespective of whether they were right or wrong, affected the way policy is formulated and the way decisions are made. Furthermore, May made it clear that it was the historian's obligation to understand these differences because they could lead to very different decisions concerning the same reality. Underlying this idea is the premise that all nations understand that they are part of a larger community of nations. Although this may seem a

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trivial observation, it is a matter of some weight to a student of Latin American history. There are clear examples in the nineteenth century—Paraguay and Guatemala are two of several—in which the country's leaders deliberately turned their nation's back to the world. There are more frequent examples—Argentina during the reign of Juan Manuel de Rosas is one—of a government simply refusing to have anything to do with another government making demands, as did the French in the River Plate in the 1830s. In none of these cases was the leader completely successful, and in all of them we can find evidence that there was at least some discussion of the wider world around them as they made the decision to isolate themselves. May's insistence that the Latin American perspective on world affairs was as valid as the US perspective was a radical proposition among mainstream students of international affairs. Surveys of US–Latin American affairs at that time by historians and by political scientists privileged the US perspective.¹ Even today, there are positivists who would find his view troubling. Some proponents of rational choice theory dismiss alternate or deviant views as less rational. May was not comfortable with that form of certitude on the part of the analyst.

In his preparation for the course, May was much influenced by Felix Gilbert, who explored the US founding fathers' understanding of their new nation's role in the world community at the time of independence.² May noted that he had not found any similar synthesis for any country in Latin America, which he took as evidence that the United States and the nations of Latin America were born with markedly different views of their role in the international community and what role foreign policy should play in their struggle for national stability.³ At the same time, there were similarities, as leaders north and south were eager students of what was happening in the Western world and believed they could use this knowledge to protect their new nations' interests. North and south, they considered themselves realists who believed that nations and groups had interests that they would try to protect. At the same time, all of them talked explicitly about values they believed set them apart from other nations and in one way or another justified their rational interests.

The difference in perspective has bedeviled relations between the United States and the nations of Latin America in the two centuries and more since independence. Today, in an effort to explain this difference, Latin American critics on the left and the right have argued that the realist-idealist dichotomy in IR theory was in itself prejudicial to Latin America and an element of hegemonic control over weaker countries.³ But the historian of hemispheric affairs knows that at independence, the United States exercised no hegemony over Latin America and it was as weak and as vulnerable as any country in the hemisphere in the early years of na-

tional independence. For that reason, it is necessary to study the difference in perspective before hegemony got in the way at the end of the nineteenth century, while recognizing that anxiety about the United States was an element in Latin American foreign affairs at least as far back as the preparations for the Congress of Panama in 1826.

It is worth noting that there is still nothing like Gilbert's book dealing with any of the *proceres* of Latin American independence.⁴ Nor in the abundant literature of the independence period is there much discussion of how foreign policy was formulated. This book takes as one of its objectives to provide at least an outline of how to study the evolution of Latin American foreign policies from independence to the present. In doing so, I point to a set of problems that the historian can solve using tools or insights from international relations theory.⁵

The second idea May left with me was that in making decisions all actors—individuals, groups, governments—distinguish between deeply held beliefs or long-maintained patterns, which he called axioms, underlying policy and the calculated, which he saw as a reaction to opportunity and context of the moment.⁶ In his view, it was entirely plausible for a government to make a calculated decision that appeared to run counter to an axiom of policy. Later in his career, May became involved in an ambitious project to teach strategic planning in a variety of graduate faculties across the country in which this distinction was the core concept.⁷ In his approach to teaching strategic planning, he combined his fascination with decision-making, which focuses on the role of ideas and the actions of individuals, with his concern for the effect of historical memory on individual and collective thinking.⁸ Whether the conflict was between states or corporations, May argued that a nation's or an individual's nightmares shape the way evidence is weighed and factors in decisionmaking are evaluated. He pointed out that these nightmares could distort or overthrow the rational calculation of interests in a specific decisionmaking situation. As we shall see, the nightmare of US hegemony and the historical legacy of anti-Americanism affect decisionmaking in Latin America today and are an important dimension in even the most scrupulously realist evaluation of factors in foreign policy decisionmaking.

To appreciate the weight of history, ask a Mexican about how the United States took half of his nation's territory. Or ask a Bolivian about the corridor to the sea, which it lost to Chile in the nineteenth century and has not stopped trying to regain. In the same fashion, people all over the hemisphere recall the US occupation of Nicaragua in the 1920s or how the United States backed a military coup against the elected government of Guatemala in the 1950s. These examples suggest that it may be as difficult for Latin Americans to shuck off the memory of anti-imperialism in for-

mulating policy as it is for the United States to shuck off the mantle of hegemonic pretension. The “lessons” we learn from history are not always the same as those learned by the other party to the negotiations.

For Gilbert, the emphasis on process had clear and powerful ideological implications. The founding fathers wanted to be sure to distinguish themselves from the monarchical, authoritarian regimes of Europe. They considered authoritarian rulers irresponsible or even illegitimate because they represented only their own interests, not those of the people. To make sure their policy was seen as legitimate, the founding fathers insisted that it had to be the product of a democratic process in which competing interests were heard and reconciled and for which the decisionmakers would be accountable to their constituents. None of the Latin American proceses worried much about the significance of the policy process to give their decisions greater legitimacy. Simón Bolívar always was confident that he understood the will of the people, although he never spent much time verifying his understanding. The legitimacy of the policy process is an important element in the origins of the arrogance of US leaders in thinking themselves exceptional and superior to their neighbors. In the absence of such a legitimating process, leaders in Chile, Argentina, and Brazil during the nineteenth century justified their assertions of superiority over their neighbors with similar arrogance but followed positivist guides from Europe to assert their racial and cultural superiority. Just as Theodore Roosevelt and his colleagues did in the United States, Chileans, Argentines, and Brazilians insisted they were more civilized than their neighbors and therefore superior to them. The policy process did not become an important part in legitimating government action in Latin America until the transition to democracy in the 1980s and the end of the Cold War.

The role of historical memory in the policy process is by no means a fetish of historians. For many years, academics and other intellectuals referred to collective behavior as “culture,” which was often a code for inferior or less modern, just as “civilized” or “modern” were used as positivist measures of success or failure, good or bad, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This changed in the 1970s when progressive analysts in a variety of academic disciplines began to use the term “culture,” as in “culture studies,” to defend unusual or progressive points of view. Students of language and history borrowed the concept from their anthropology colleagues to justify difference without pejorative assumptions. The concept entered the IR discussion as “strategic culture” to offer clues to understanding why specific countries behaved as they did over time. Students of strategic culture traced patterns of national behavior—what May called axioms of policy—and how those patterns affect specific decisions—the ones May called calculated policies. The principal enthusiasts during the Cold War for strategic culture as a way to study international affairs were

military strategists and geopoliticians.⁹ May was uncomfortable with the way strategic culture came to be used because he found it inflexible. It did not provide for the way key leaders can help create strategic culture and change it. In this book, I identify individuals who were crucial to the policy process and explain how they were able to change policy over time.¹⁰

Another objective is to explain how, in the two centuries after independence, the recurring and persistent conflicts between the United States and Latin America have left a painful and bitter legacy that compromises efforts to achieve community in the hemisphere, even in situations when there is a broad range of shared objective interests and values and a willingness to collaborate. The historical legacy of conflict hampers efforts among Latin American nations to create effective regionalism as much as it hinders efforts to establish collaboration between the United States and Latin America. There are several examples of this in the Barack Obama administration, when counterparts in Latin America literally are not able to hear the change in rhetoric used by the president of the United States.

To untangle these problems, someone in the United States studying relations with Latin America must ensure that the Latin American perspective is taken into account. Little has been written about Latin American foreign policy before the Cold War and almost all the writing on US–Latin American relations is from the US perspective. The few books by Latin Americans dealing with inter-American relations in the twentieth century were mostly anti-US tirades.¹¹ One significant exception to this—and a beacon leading my journey—is a book written by my former colleague at UNC, Federico G. Gil, in which he gave as much attention to the nations of Latin America as to the United States, although he didn't give much attention to the policy process.¹² In stressing the importance of the Latin American perspective, Gil echoed May's counsel.

The next step along my road to an appreciation of the Latin American perspective was the seminar I organized with Heraldo Muñoz and the volume we edited subsequently in the 1980s, *Latin American Nations in World Politics*.¹³ Muñoz's argument that no nation is without power and that the purpose of foreign policy was to make the most of the quota of power, soft or hard, available to each nation struck me with the force of an epiphany.¹⁴ His suggestion was particularly attractive because through my own research, I was convinced that US hegemony should never be understood as total control. Even in the egregious cases of military intervention in the Caribbean Basin in the early decades of the twentieth century that I had studied, in which US forces enjoyed total dominance, I was struck by how frequently the United States was frustrated in its efforts to manipulate people who were supposed to be their puppets and how difficult it was to impose a US agenda on locals. Power should never be considered a zero-sum category in inter-American relations.¹⁵ Muñoz indicated another di-

mension to the study of hegemony: it was not there in the beginning; it never was absolute, it always left wiggle room. The key, then, is to understand the perception of hegemony in Latin America and the awareness among Latin American policymakers of what wiggle room they had. In more formal language, we ask what space in the international system Latin American leaders believed they had. How they anticipated using that space is what I call the exercise of agency, which is the key concept in understanding the Latin American drive for autonomous action in the international community.¹⁶

I received further education in the Latin American perspective by participating in the annual meetings of RIAL, the Latin American Association of International Relations.¹⁷ Also during the 1980s, I had opportunities to teach courses in Latin America on inter-American relations. In that context it was impossible not to take the Latin American point of view into account. The more I studied the history of Latin American international relations, the more biographies of its leaders I read, and the more I interacted with Latin American scholars and policymakers, the more I was struck by how limited were the expressions by these leaders of their sense of what agency their nations had in the international system, at least until the end of the Cold War. Muñoz's argument about the existence of power even in the weakest of nations was not obvious to many of our colleagues. Some, of course, used RIAL as a forum to express their anger with the United States and sought to paint their countries as helpless victims of hegemonic dominance. The majority was not content with anti-Americanism as an expression of foreign policy. They wanted to understand why so many countries in the region, whether governed by military regimes or by civilian regimes, put so little effort into formulating foreign policies that would protect their nation's interests.

RIAL was the origin of an epistemological community, a group interested in understanding how the nations of Latin America could define and defend their interests and exercise agency in the international system. It was a group that valued intellectual honesty and sought active participation in a larger academic community that prized theoretical sophistication. Much more than their European and US colleagues, the Latin American members of RIAL were intensely interested in how their study of international relations could help the shared concern for democracy and development. They were as interested as I was in how to stimulate agency in Latin America. This shared concern was what led me and Muñoz to put together a conference on the foreign policies of Latin American nations with participation of many of our RIAL colleagues.

In this book, I set out looking for historical evidence of agency, published writings, or recorded government discussions that a nation had a sense of its identity in the international system and that it could exercise

that identity through a vast array of instruments, including what we now call soft power and values or influence.¹⁸ Once defined, it is easy to see that articulation of agency in Latin America varied from country to country, even in the same country over time. There are few examples of such public discussion in the nineteenth century, and I discuss these in Chapter 2. Beyond these examples, there is very little expression in Latin America until the middle of the twentieth century of axioms of foreign policy and very little self-conscious discussion in the region of policy formulation, no doubt in part because legislatures and public opinion played only minor roles in governance in most countries until the second half of the twentieth century. All of this changed at the end of the Cold War.

This is in sharp contrast to the historical experience of the United States. From independence, the United States, although preoccupied with its boundaries, saw itself enmeshed in a global power system such that the local and the global were intertwined. In Latin America, the first signs of participation in the international system were acts of desperation to call on one European power to protect them from another or by calling upon the United States to protect them from European intervention. There is extremely little evidence of newly independent nations taking a proactive stance as they set out to find their way in the international system. References to a wider community up to the end of the nineteenth century were vague proposals for bringing American states closer together, which we may consider echoes of Bolivarian dreams rather than specific proposals for foreign policy. The only exceptions to this were, on the one hand, the writings of several specialists in international law who warned that the dominant powers in Europe (they included the United States only at the very end of the nineteenth century) were developing rules for international affairs that were prejudicial to the interests of Latin American countries, and, on the other hand, the writings of students of culture and literature who commented on the European sense of civilization and how far behind their countries had fallen.

The first clear example of geopolitical thinking and the assertion of agency is the Chilean war with Bolivia and Peru in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Chileans had a very clear idea of how they wanted to be in the world. They deliberately confined their aspirations to the west coast of South America. Theirs was regional agency, geographically circumscribed, and they consciously fended off threats to their hegemony in their region. The next example, chronologically, is the Brazilian definition of its foreign policy model at the end of the empire and the beginning of the republican period. The Brazilians expressed their agency by extending their borders through diplomacy while making it perfectly plain that they did not want to compete with the United States nor meddle in European politics. They saw their hegemony as regional, as did the Chileans, but the

Brazilians were not so limited geographically in their pretensions. In the case of Mexico, there were clear expressions of agency in building a defense against the French intervention in the middle of the century and in attempting to protect themselves against US encroachment at the end of the century, so that Mexican agency in the international system was defensive and continued to be so until the end of the Cold War. When the Argentines expressed their agency at the end of the nineteenth century, it was global (or at least European) but restricted almost entirely to trade and investment, so that the Argentine's sense of agency was self-restricted to specific facets of power. They were certain they had a role to play in international affairs and it involved blocking US plans for a hemispheric community while asserting their superiority to other nations in Latin America and maximizing their exchange with Great Britain and other European countries.

These early expressions of agency in Latin America, partial and self-constrained, came at a time when Alfred Thayer Mahan, Brooks Adams, Theodore Roosevelt, and others were measuring the United States against global powers and planning how to acquire the attributes of power necessary to compete with them. In the first years of the twentieth century, Argentina and Brazil purchased battleships to add to their power, but the debate in each country focused on the competition with the other, rather than as part of a Mahan-like policy to measure themselves against the world's great powers.

The relative lack of agency for so long after independence is the single most important difference between the United States and Latin America in their approaches to the world. The relative absence of agency in Latin America and the process by which agency grows and evolves in different countries is the central thread of this book's narrative. When does self-conscious agency in international affairs appear in Latin America, and what is the catalyst for its appearance? From the beginning of the twentieth century until the end of the Cold War, US hegemonic pretensions shaped inter-American relations and complicated the expression of Latin American agency. As often as not, expressions of Latin American agency in the twentieth century were framed as strategies to avoid US bullying rather than as axiomatic principles of national interest or expressions of agency in world affairs. It is not always easy to parse anti-Americanism from agency after the early years of the twentieth century. My approach is to consider anti-Americanism as a distortion of agency. That is, where it is clear the nation's leaders confined their thinking about international affairs to how to fend off the United States, foreign policy was little more than pleasing or antagonizing the United States, with little evidence of consideration of

using policy as a means to maximize the nation's interests or improving the well-being of the nation's people. I consider these cases of partial agency. This is not to say that subservience or opposition to the United States were not rational policies. It suggests that in the absence of evidence that the government sought to maximize its agency through such subservience or opposition, a nation's agency cannot be complete or fully realized through such expression. The only true exception to this is Cuba after the revolution in 1959, where there is ample evidence that the nation's leaders focused their energy on protecting themselves from the United States while seeking to use their defiance of the United States to maximize their influence in the broader international system. Whether in doing so they improved the quality of life of the Cuban people has been a subject of intense debate throughout the hemisphere for many years.

My academic interest in understanding the foreign policy process and the origins of agency in Latin America got personal and very practical when I joined the Woodrow Wilson Center in 1990. The policy process was suddenly important in Latin America because of transitions to democracy. Public opinion and state accountability were front and center. The policy process always had been important in the United States, creating a sharp contrast with Latin America where the absence of process was tied to the absence of legitimacy.¹⁹ The transition to democracy brought with it a sense of entitlement and opened the path to agency. How this agency was to be framed was the objective of a project the Wilson Center put together with Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) in Chile.²⁰

It is no shame to confess that the group of academics in this project from all over the hemisphere shared in the general euphoria after the Cold War that there was a new world order in the offing and that it would be a rules-based community centered on the United Nations and other organizations that represented the new international civil society and the inevitable international drive toward democracy.²¹ We were optimists and an important part of that optimism was the expectation that the new world order would reduce or even end US hegemony in the hemisphere and that all of the nations in the hemisphere would be treated as equals. The idea was to work directly with decisionmakers, including the military and members of the legislature and press, to explore ways nations of the region might improve the policy-making process, strengthen mutual confidence, and create a sense of community in the hemisphere. We sought ways to have nations work together for common goals, become conscious of fixing their nation's policy goals, make the policy-making process more transparent, and open discussions of how they might take advantage of the transi-

tion to democracy and the end of the Cold War to insert themselves to greater advantage into the international community. Coordinating the research of this group and working closely with officials in governments throughout the hemisphere to nudge the policy process pitched a group of academics into participatory research and made us actors in the policy process.²²

At the outset of this collaborative project, first called “Security in the Americas” and then renamed “Creating Community in the Americas,” it seemed evident that the primary challenge was to bring into higher profile the opportunity for Latin American nations to have autonomous action in the international system that had opened with the end of the Cold War. This proved to be more difficult than we had anticipated. It was surprising to us how powerful a restraint was created by the heavy legacy of history on inter-American relations. On one hand, we were dismayed to see that many decisionmakers in the United States could not understand why Latin American nations wanted to maintain armed forces. Repeatedly, in the State Department, Congress, and Southern Command, we were asked why the Latin Americans simply didn’t completely disarm their authoritarian militaries and enjoy the protection provided by the United States. The ideas that sovereign states wanted their own armed forces, now under civilian control, and that US hegemony was considered anathema to Latin Americans were incomprehensible to many in the US government and continues to be difficult for many to accept to this day.

On the other hand, and equally disturbing, decisionmakers in Latin America were reluctant to dedicate themselves to formulating autonomous foreign policies because they lacked the expertise to do so and were fearful that expressions of independence would antagonize the United States. The concept of collegial action in the hemisphere was not intuitively obvious. Among Latin American intellectuals and academics, there were as many who were prepared to denounce US hegemony as there were those prepared to think about what autonomy meant for their country. Few seemed able to consider both at the same time. In addition, and destructive to regional collaboration, decisionmakers appeared more interested in devoting their energies to old boundary disputes that had been put on the back burner during the Cold War and were unwilling or unable to devote much energy to exploring what role their nations might play outside the hemisphere in the larger community of nations.

The project at the Wilson Center operated on multiple fronts. We worked with decisionmakers to build confidence between them and their colleagues in other countries to discuss differences and learn what might bring them together. By virtue of our meetings with them, we increased the permeability of the states to ideas from the academic community. We

aimed at the press to facilitate communication about the policy process and increase the sense of mutual accountability between the public and their representatives. Through our publications, we consciously adapted a theoretical discussion in the academic literature in Europe and the United States to the reality in Latin America and contributed to the growing debate among scholars in the region. Although the phrase “relational networks” or the term “regimes” were not in wide use when we began our efforts, it seemed logical to us that increasing points of contact among decisionmakers and their constituents and increasing the opportunities for contacts among interested parties would improve the policy process.²³

The transition to democracy throughout Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s together with the end of the Cold War made agency more accessible to all nations. The bipolar competition of the Cold War had restricted agency through decades in which the United States forced nations to choose between alliance and subordination or be seen as in league with the Soviet Union, just as it had kept under wraps old boundary disputes and antagonisms that created animosity between states in the region and threatened the region’s stability. There was little space for agency outside of the bipolar struggle, although several countries found some measure of comfort within the movement of nonaligned nations. The most effective of these efforts to create autonomy was by Costa Rica, which, under the leadership of José Figueres Ferrer, combined fierce anticommunism, which won him respect in Washington, with equally fierce support for social democracy. After the Cold War, leaders in Costa Rica leveraged this position to advance their agency in the global system, consciously building their role in world affairs on the strategic culture of neutrality in regional disputes as a liberal, pluralist democracy.²⁴

Cuba was the most fully realized example of nations that set themselves against the United States and for the Soviet Union and used that position to exercise an important role for themselves in Latin America and the world outside the hemisphere (Africa in the case of Cuba) and international organizations. A more complicated example of hostility to the United States driving foreign policy is the unique pattern followed by Argentina of voting against the United States in the United Nations on 95 percent of the opportunities presented between 1950 and 1990. This pattern was maintained across civilian and military governments, Peronist governments and Radical governments, even during governments that professed support for the United States during the Cold War.²⁵ The behavior has a patina of agency, although a perverse form of it; it provoked more than a patina of animosity from Washington and did not win significant approbation in the region.

After the Cold War, there were efforts by former Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez to establish an alliance against the United States, which he called ALBA, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America. Chávez tried to build his agency in world affairs by courting regimes that expressed their hostility to the United States, such as Iran, Russia, and Syria. Membership in ALBA is a case of partial agency or perverted agency in that the policy was formulated with the primary objective of irritating the United States, on the assumption that such irritation would enhance national interests and their influence with other countries in the region. In the cases of Cuba and Venezuela under Chávez, it certainly is agency because it is the means by which the country establishes its position in world politics. In the case of Cuba, it is clear that opposition to the United States created space for the nation in international affairs; for Venezuela, the results are less clear. For other members of ALBA—Nicaragua, Bolivia, Ecuador, and some of the islands in the Caribbean—there is little agency generated by their membership.

The same pattern of partial agency was followed by the small nations in the Caribbean Basin and Central America throughout the twentieth century with the exception of Nicaragua after 1979. Their foreign policy was focused on the United States. Foreign policy was an instrument that ruling elites used to hold on to domestic power. I refer to these cases as “penetrated polities.” The government and the opposition maintained lobbies in Washington to influence the United States in their struggle for power. Only neighboring states, and then only on occasion, figured prominently in Central American foreign policy, with Costa Rica as an important exception. Discussions of foreign policy more broadly were very rare and not conducted with reference to public opinion or as part of a policy process since democratic governance was either nonexistent or extremely imperfect. This began to change when the civil wars in several Central American countries in the 1970s and 1980s provoked a public discussion of foreign policy there for the first time.²⁶ In addition, the new international civil society—human rights groups, international courts, aid agencies, and multilateral groups—were an important factor in stirring interest in agency in several countries in an effort to deter the militarization of their civil conflicts that had been precipitated or exacerbated by US intervention. Today, the countries of Central America constitute a spectrum of efforts to achieve agency, from the case of Costa Rica, with a fully articulated sense of its role in the international community, to Honduras and Guatemala, where interest in agency is minimal and the countries remain penetrated polities. El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Panama for very different reasons constitute a kind of middle ground in which the process of seeking agency in interna-

tional affairs and making the debate over foreign policy part of the public policy discussion are just beginning. In all of the Central American countries, there is an informal alliance between those who favor expanding the space for democratic contestation and international civil society. This alliance was crucial in pushing Guatemalan president Otto Perez Molina from office in September 2015 when his government was accused of massive corruption. These groups favor stronger ties to the international community and stronger institutional organizations to bring nations together. The fact that immigration, drug trafficking, and gang violence are international in scope makes them part of the new foreign policy debate throughout the subregion.²⁷

In the Caribbean, the former Anglophone colonies parlay their political stability and respect for core values into major roles in all available international organizations. The English-speaking faction forms the largest homogeneous bloc in the Organization of American States (OAS) and wields considerable influence in the United Nations. The Dominican Republic, after a long period of instability following the overthrow of the Trujillo dictatorship, has tied itself to Central America for the purposes of building international trade and attracting foreign investment. Sadly, Haiti continues its long history as an unstable, impoverished country, despite the unflagging efforts of the international donor community.

The most obvious case of the deliberate, conscious assumption of agency in South America with the objective of maximizing national interests on a global scale while taking into account the role of the United States is Chile after the transition to democracy in 1990. As it happens, the foreign policy of the Concertación government was in the hands of an extraordinary group of academic activists almost all of whom had spent time in the United States during the dictatorship and most of whom had taken advantage of their exile to earn advanced degrees. They were all active members of RIAL. These Chilenos are the heroes of the final chapters of this book. Collectively, they provided the road map away from anti-Americanism, dependence, and a sense of victimization to awareness of how to maximize national interests in world affairs. They brought the concept of soft power into the hemispheric spotlight. Without these Chilenos, I would not have a paradigmatic case to which I could point. There are other cases of agency in the period after the Cold War, and I deal with them as well. My purpose is to cover the entire process—from independence to the present—of how different countries came to see themselves in the world and how they formulated foreign policies to defend their national interests. My method will be to juxtapose the posture of the United States against those of countries in the region at different periods of history to understand bet-

ter how to manage the transition from hegemony to a community of nations exercising their agency.

Most of the nations of Latin America seized the opportunity for agency presented at the end of the Cold War only timidly or in a partial manner. Even today, many of the Latin American nations remain passive or uncertain participants in the wider international community. In the past decade Mexico has moved with confidence to play a role in the international system, although dealing with the scourge of drug trafficking, with its accompanying patterns of corruption and impunity, is a powerful constraint. Since the 1990s, Brazil has asserted a role as a major power but has been uncertain as to how that role might be exercised. Venezuela, through ALBA, has led an effort to create an anti-American regional organization, but it has very little in the way of a positive agenda and has lost influence since the death of Chávez in 2013. More promising is the movement for “post-hegemonic” regionalism (UNASUR and CELAC) with the exclusion of the United States as a form of collective agency. It is too early in the process to judge the success of this new regionalism, except to say that to create regional organizations without the United States is further evidence that anti-US feeling is still a powerful driver of foreign policy thinking in Latin America and organizations founded to spite the United States have no clear rules to guide the community.

Globalization is pushing all of the nations in the region toward more active roles in the world; all are in the world to a greater degree than at any time in their history. Globalization has empowered the expanding epistemological community concerned with international affairs. Spawned and nurtured by RIAL, there is now a second generation of students of international relations who are intensely concerned with the policy process and are fully informed about the activities of their counterparts in other countries. Mexico and Brazil are remarkable for the effusion of publications in the field, websites that carry debates on foreign policy, and ambitious projects to make government documents available to the public online.²⁸ Chile and Argentina have also conducted massive projects to put public documents online. More and more, Latin American scholars are participating in professional discussions of matters of common interest with colleagues in the United States and Europe.²⁹

In methodological terms, my primary concern is to provide the historical narrative necessary to describe the emergence of agency in the nineteenth century and the emergence of US hegemony at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Thereafter, the concern is how the nations in Latin America dealt with that hegemony. Once the Cold War ended and the transition to democracy occurred in Latin America, the focus widens to include the policy process and how the new democracies used public de-

bate of policy to empower and legitimate their agency, just as the founding fathers had done in the United States two centuries earlier. The early episodes of agency in Latin America unfold with limited public discussion and a mix of realist and idealist proposals. After the Cold War, the predominant approach is neorealist or liberal with great attention paid to soft power, along with a growing concern with how to create and participate in relational networks as the best means of defending national interests. The more developed the agency, as in Chile, the more flexible and eclectic the approach to projecting power and protecting interests. Through the historical narrative I provide the perspectives of both the United States and major nations in Latin America. Throughout I pay attention to leaders and to the decisionmaking process. Nuance and subtlety make the narrative more complex, the better to reflect a complex reality.

In the final chapter, I wrestle with the dilemma of how the nations of Latin America are coming to terms with the legacy of US hegemony in the hemisphere. The mirror image of this dilemma is how the United States deals with a new geopolitical moment in which pretensions to hegemony are counterproductive. Yet, hegemonic or otherwise, the United States will be the most powerful nation in the hemisphere for the foreseeable future and relations between it and Latin America will continue to be asymmetrical in terms of national power. Is it possible in these new conditions to think of a hemispheric community of nations? The historical narrative ends with the decision by the United States and Cuba to restore normal relations. Nothing President Barack Obama could have done would be a more powerful symbol that his government, at last, was prepared to enter the posthegemonic era. By that decision and in his speech at the VII Summit of the Americas in April 2015, he invited the nations of the hemisphere to join him in the march into the future. The response from Latin America was more a babel than applause.

Notes

1. Perhaps the paradigmatic example of this hubris is Samuel F. Bemis, *The Latin American Policy of the United States* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1943).

2. Felix Gilbert, *To the Farewell Address: Ideas of Early American Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961).

3. Marxist and neo-Marxist writers take this view as does Carlos Escudé, *Realismo periférico* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1992); and *Foreign Policy Theory in Menem's Argentina* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997). Escudé refers to the academic debate as Anglo-American IR theory. He has harsh words for rational choice theory.

4. This is beginning to change. Mexican academics, with the full cooperation of the Foreign Ministry, are beginning to publish online a mammoth collection of documents and studies based on those documents. Scholars in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile

over the past decade have produced revisionist histories of the early national period that deal with foreign relations. Together with growing academic interest in international relations, this should lead soon to the production of such a synthesis. I deal with this growing interest in foreign affairs in Chapter 7.

5. One recent example of an attempt to do this is Max Paul Friedman and Tom Long, "Soft Balancing in the Americas: Latin American Opposition to U.S Intervention," *International Security*, Summer 2015, which explores late nineteenth century efforts to avoid US hegemony within a theoretical framework.

6. Ernest R. May, "The Nature of Foreign Policy: The Calculated Versus the Axiomatic," *Daedalus* 91.4 (1962): 653–668. Others draw the distinction between strategy and tactics; some have used the concept of strategic culture to get at the distinction between deeply felt and long-held values or long-term goals and reactions to the moment as drivers of decision making and policy. More recently, in Latin America, people refer to *politicas de estado* to suggest policies formed on the basis of wide consensus, above the interests of a single party or government.

7. I participated in such a course in the business school of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Other faculties in which the course was taught were law, arts and sciences, environmental studies, and fine arts. My colleague Otis L. Graham Jr. summarized our experience in Otis L. Graham Jr., "The Uses and Misuses of History: Roles in Policymaking," *Public Historian* 5.2 (1983).

8. For example, Ernest R. May, "*Lessons of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973); and Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers* (New York: Free Press, 1986). The influence May had on his Kennedy School colleague Graham T. Allison is obvious in *The Essence of Decision* (New York: Little, Brown, 1971), which he reissued in a second edition, with Philip Zelickow, using tapes from the Kennedy decisionmaking sessions not available for the first ed. May explored the format in an earlier book on executive decisionmaking, *The Ultimate Decision* (New York: George Braziller, 1960).

9. Yosef Lipid and F. V. Kratochwil, eds., *The Return of Culture and Identity to IR Theory* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1996); C. S. Gray, "Strategic Culture as Context: The First Generation of Theory Strikes Back," *Review of International Studies* 25.1 (1999); S. Pore, "What Is the Context?," *Review of International Studies* 29.2 (2003); J. S. Lantis, "Strategic Culture and National Security Policy," *International Studies Review* 4.3 (2003). For an example of how the US Southern Command used strategic culture as a way to understand the foreign policy of Latin American nations, see the various publications of Florida International University, Strategic Culture, available online at <http://www.arc.fiu.edu>. Critics of strategic culture consider it a sloppy way to build dense analysis without real historical or anthropological research.

10. José Figueres and the Baron of Rio Branco are two such leaders who are discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

11. See, as an example, Eduardo Galeano, *Las venas abiertas de America Latina* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 1971); an English edition appeared in 1973. Curiously, in an interview just before his death in 2015, Galeano disavowed his book (*New York Times*, April 14, 2015, A17). For a more general analysis of anti-Americanism in Latin America, see Stephen Haseler, *The Varieties of Anti-Americanism: Reflex and Response* (Washington, DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1985); Mariano Aguirre and Ana Montes, eds., *De Bolivar al Frente Sandinista: Antología del pensamiento anti-imperialista latinoamericano* (Madrid: Ediciones de la Torre, 1979).

12. Federico G. Gil, *Latin American–United States Relations* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1971). Gil sidestepped the question of hegemony because he did not want to get involved with its mirror image, the sense of victimization in Latin America. As

indicated, the interest among Latin American scholars in the history of international affairs has grown significantly in the past two decades.

13. Heraldo Muñoz and Joseph S. Tulchin, eds., *Latin American Nations in World Politics* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984); there are Spanish and Portuguese editions of this volume as well as a second edition. I met Muñoz through Gil and published his article on strategic interdependence while I was editor of *Latin American Research Review*. Muñoz went on to become foreign minister of Chile under President Michele Bachelet in 2014.

14. Muñoz began with a critique of dependency theory as distorting foreign policy in “Cambio y continuidad en el debate sobre dependencia,” *Estudios Internacionales* 11.44 (1978): 88–138. His argument on power as greater than zero is in “The Strategic Dependency of the Centers and the Economic Importance of the Latin American Periphery,” *Latin American Research Review* 16.3 (1981): 3–29.

15. Joseph S. Tulchin, *The Aftermath of War* (New York: NYU Press, 1971).

16. Agency is a concept used across a wide range of social science disciplines. My use has its origins in psychology, where it refers to an individual’s sense of his or her capacity for action. It assumes that action takes place within the constraints of an institution, a group, or a system. It implies consciousness and will. It makes no assumptions as to power or capacity.

17. RIAL played a vital role in bringing international relations theory to Latin America. Several key players did their graduate work in the United States and then brought their learning home with them. This collective effort was an important part of the transition from the Cold War to a new period of inter-American relations and I deal with it again in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

18. The concept of soft power was introduced by Joseph S. Nye Jr. and Robert O. Keohane, *World Politics in Transition* (New York: Little, Brown, 1977).

19. The absence of legitimacy and process during the military dictatorships of the 1970s and 1980s and the semi-authoritarian regimes of Central America throughout the twentieth century are treated in subsequent chapters.

20. The codirector of the project was Augusto Varas, later replaced with Francisco Rojas. During the Chilean dictatorship, Varas earned his doctorate in the United States in sociology from Washington University in St. Louis. Others who worked with us were Rut Diamint, (Argentina), Cristina Eguizabal (El Salvador), Raul Benitez (Mexico), Lilian Bobea (Dominican Republic), and Tomas Guedes da Costa (Brazil). Others who collaborated over the years were Luis Bitencourt, Ricardo Sennes, Ricardo Cordova, Luis Guillermo Solís, and Carlos Basombrio.

21. This euphoria is described in detail in Chapter 6.

22. The products of this project were a series of bulletins, more than a dozen books, and nearly a hundred meetings among decisionmakers and academics. All of the publications, including reports on the meetings, are on the Wilson Center website (<http://www.wilsoncenter.org>).

23. The first offshoot from this project was one directed by Rut Diamint that focused on communication between the military and the press and on the broader question of civil control over the military, “La cuestión cívico-militar en las nuevas democracias latinoamericanas.” It produced a number of publications listed in the bibliography. Our interest in the policy process spawned another project at the Wilson Center that encouraged graduate studies programs in public policy at several universities. See Joan Dassin, Joseph S. Tulchin, and Amelia Brown, eds., “Training a New Generation of Leaders, Woodrow Wilson Center Reports on the Americas #3” (Washington, DC: Wilson Center, n.d.)

24. The strategic culture of Costa Rica is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

25. Daniel Klickoff, “La historia de la experiencia de Argentina en las Naciones

Unidas,” study prepared for Minister Guido di Tella, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 1994, manuscript in the possession of the author .

26. Exceptions are the cases of Nicaragua in the Sandino episode in the 1920s and Guatemala in the 1950s.

27. These issues have come to be called “intermestic” because they are at once local and international.

28. These studies are cited in detail in Chapters 6 and 7. Guadalupe González González in Mexico, Luis Maira in Chile and Mexico, and José Augusto Guilhon Albuquerque in Brazil are just a few of the major players in this new development. Maira was the prime mover in refounding RIAL in 2014 as the Council on International Relations of Latin America and the Caribbean.

29. Jorge I. Domínguez and Ana Covarrubias, eds., *Routledge Handbook of Latin America in the World* (New York: Routledge, 2015) is just one outstanding example of the fruitful exchange among scholars in the region.