

The background of the cover is a light yellow-green color. It is decorated with several stylized, light green leaf motifs that appear to be floating or falling from the top left towards the bottom right. These motifs are scattered across the entire cover, with some appearing near the top and others near the bottom.

CAPTURING THE REVOLUTION

**The United States, Central America,
and Nicaragua, 1961–1972**

Michael D. Gambone

 **Greenwood**
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CAPTURING THE REVOLUTION

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and Nicaragua, 1961–1972

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*For
Audrey Philcox
A good Christian woman
and a gentle soul*

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AID	Agency for International Development
ANC	Accion National Conservadora
ANSESAL	Salandoran National Security Agency
CABEI	Central American Bank for Economic Integration
CACM	Central American Common Market
CASP	Country Analysis and Strategy Paper
CGT	Confederacion General de Trabajo (General Confederation of Workers)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIEP	Council on International Economic Policy
CINCARIB	Commander-in-Chief, Caribbean
CNT	Confederacion Nacional de Trabajadores (National Confederation of Workers)
CONDECA	Consejo de Defensa Centro Americana (Central American Defense Council)
DLF	Developmental Loan Fund
ECLA	Economic Commission for Latin America
EEC	European Economic Community
EXIM	Export–Import Bank
FAN	Fuerza Aérea de Nicaragua
FAR	Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes
FER	Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario
FOA	Foreign Operations Administration
FRS	Frente Revolucionario Sandino
FSLN	Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional
FTM	Federacion de Trabajadores de Managua (Managua Worker's Federation)
GN	Guardia Nacional
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IAN	Agrarian Reform Institute
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICA	International Cooperation Administration
IDA	International Development Association
IDB	Inter-American Defense Board

IFC	International Finance Corporation
IIC	Integration Industries Convention
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INFONAC	Instituto de Fomento Nacional (National Development Agency)
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
LAFTA	Latin American Free Trade Association
MAAG	Military Advisory and Assistance Group
MAP	Military Assistance Program
MDAP	Military Defense Assistance Program
METASA	Metales y Estructuras, S.A.
MR	Movilizacion Republicana
MR-13	Movimiento Revolucionario 13 de Noviembre
MSP	Mutual Security Program
NAC	National Advisory Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NEP	New Economic Policy
NIE	National Intelligence Estimate
NSAM	National Security Action Memorandum
NSC	National Security Council
NSDM	National Security Decision Memorandum
NSSM	National Security Study Memorandum
OAS	Organization of American States
ODECA	Organizacion de Estados Centroamericanos
OECD	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
OISP	Overseas Internal Security Program
OPS	Office of Public Safety
PCT	Partido Conservador Tradicionalista
PGT	Communist Guatemalan Workers Party
PLI	Partido Liberal Independiente
PLN	Partido Liberal Nacionalista
PMA	Policia Militar Ambulante
PRD	Partido Revolucionario Dominicano
PSC	Partido Social Cristiano (Social Christian Party)
PSN	Partido Socialista Nicaragüense
ROCAP	Regional Office for Central America and Panama
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty
SFG	Special Forces Group
SIECA	Secretariat for Economic Integration
SNIE	Special National Intelligence Estimate
SPTF	Social Progress Trust Fund
UFCO	United Fruit Company
UNO	Union Nacional Opositora
USARCARIB	United States Army Caribbean
USMC	United States Marine Corps
USOM	United States Operations Mission
WTIS	World Trade Information Service

Introduction

In 1961, revolutionary fervor spread around the globe, challenging any one nation or ideology to capture it. Throughout the underdeveloped world, the collapse of old colonial empires heralded approaching upheaval. By 1960, all of French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa was free. All told, seventeen African nations would emerge from the chaos that followed Europe's scramble out of the continent between 1960 and 1961 alone.¹ In Southeast Asia, the final resolution of French withdrawal proceeded as guerrilla war embroiled both Laos and Vietnam.² Throughout Latin America, old authoritarian regimes suffered under the strain of restive populations intent on socioeconomic and political reform. Between 1956 and 1960, ten military governments were toppled in Latin America, while popular democratic movements enjoyed their greatest resurgence since World War II.³

What was the best means to prevent the spread of revolution? This was a question asked in capitals throughout the Western world in 1961. Should the symptoms of trouble—instability, strikes, political agitation, low-intensity war—be addressed first? Or should the root causes, the social and economic underpinnings of revolution, find first priority. Would it be of benefit to build barriers against revolution or attempt to “capture” the desires, expectations, and energy that drove it?

In the years following World War II, the United States devoted enormous energies to answering these questions. Explicit was the desire to build both a shield against instability and prevent its precursors. The latter intent was clearly apparent at the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944, where U.S. representatives worked to refashion the structure of international finance around the World Bank, a measure designed to encourage multilateral trade, interdependence, and peace. Their hope was to avoid autarky and rival regional economic systems that had severely undercut global stability in the 1930s and contributed to the world war. However, Bretton Woods failed to anticipate the breakdown of American–Soviet relations in the aftermath of World War II. Faced with the onset of the Cold War, policy makers were forced to develop an increasingly intricate set of programs to address the issue of instability. One such effort was the Marshall Plan in 1947, a series of loan, grant, and assistance programs designed to “capture” or preempt instability by removing its economic foundations. These were later reinforced by U.S. support for Western European economic integration, a process that eventually led to the European Economic Community. In the meantime, dedicated American policies were also constructed to shield Western Eu-

rope from outright symptoms of instability. U.S. military assistance followed in the wake of insurgency in Greece and Turkey in 1947. Two years later, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization integrated the defense of Western Europe and its allies.

By the 1950s, the regional focus of these policies changed, although their basic mechanisms remained largely intact. Faced with the increasing restiveness of underdeveloped nations and open Soviet support for "wars of national liberation," Washington redrew its efforts to both "capture" revolutionary activity and shield against it. The Eisenhower administration would create such new agencies as the Developmental Loan Fund (1957), the International Development Association (1960) and, in Latin America, the Inter-American Development Bank (1959).⁴ Throughout, the intent was to sponsor productive, pro-American development in lieu of instability and potential Communist inroads throughout the world. Accompanying this, however, Eisenhower also prepared a mailed fist, heavily promoting American military assistance to the Third World through the Mutual Security Program as well as approving frequent interventions by the Central Intelligence Agency in potential hot spots.⁵

The new Kennedy administration maintained continuity with the past when crafting policies to circumvent revolution. It maintained the American article of faith that military, political, and economic assistance, coupled with selective instances of intervention, would allow the United States to prevail over global instability. The young policy makers present in 1961 believed that free markets bolstered by a strong dollar and mentored by the World Bank could produce not only greater prosperity, but a dynamic entrepreneurial environment that would foster democracy. Similarly, anti-Communism, reinforced by U.S. military assistance and the American nuclear umbrella, would allow for the requisite stability necessary for free economic and political systems. The final product of introducing these institutions would be a linear progression of development toward new, modern, liberal states. The future of the Third World, as they saw it, would thus resemble Western Europe, rebuilt with U.S. assistance, protected by U.S. nuclear power, and aligned with American ideals.

The new Kennedy administration departed from the past to the extent that it realized the vast complexity of this task and the need to integrate both American and local institutions into one viable response to revolution. Somehow, Washington would have to effectively marry U.S. resources and knowhow with the dozens of disparate underdeveloped nations clamoring for stability, prosperity, and reform. The formidable challenge of 1961 was to recraft policy that had succeeded in Europe to fit entirely new political, military, and socioeconomic environments throughout the Southern Hemisphere.

Latin America offered U.S. policy makers a likely place to begin. Long considered by Washington to be a primary sphere of U.S. influence, the hemisphere had undergone significant changes as a result of the Great Depression and World War II. The international financial crisis of 1929 had removed the last vestiges of non-U.S. economic influence from Latin America and encouraged local industrial development. While this sector had surged (particularly in steel, autos, and consumer products) in the 1940s and 1950s, it had still not resolved the basic dependency of most Latin American economies on primary commodities. How could these structural problems

be reconciled with local demands for modernization and the expectation of the industrialized nations of the world that the flow of cheap raw materials would continue uninterrupted? Moreover, how could growth be channeled to meet the increasing expectations of Latin American citizens for higher wages, better housing, and improved living standards?⁶ Similarly, the Allied triumph against fascism in 1945 had served as a political point of departure in Latin America. Bolstered by the defeat of Hitler and the Allies' endorsement of the "Four Freedoms" (freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, freedom from fear), advocacy of liberal democracy heavily influenced the Latin American political discourse of the postwar period. Students, labor unions, peasant organizations, and a few regimes interested in weathering this trend embraced the principle of popular, participatory democracy. The days of authoritarian, oligarchical government seemed numbered in many countries, a reality driven home by the collapse of the Batista regime in 1959. Effectively capturing this intricate array of problems and expectations posed one of the greatest foreign-policy challenges faced by the United States in 1961. In practice, it would require a program of a greater conceptual and financial scale than the Marshall Plan.

For their own part, Latin Americans saw great possibilities and great dangers at the start of the 1960s. Postwar economic development had introduced entirely new industrial and manufacturing sectors into the hemisphere. Foreign capital had begun to return, prompted by the respective economic "miracles" of Europe and Japan. However, deep, systemic social problems had accompanied progress. Urban populations exploded after 1945, creating shortages of housing, medical care, and schools. Unused arable land vanished, consumed by burgeoning export agriculture. Infrastructure, particularly electrical power generation, failed to keep pace with residential, commercial, or industrial growth. Trade deficits and balance-of-payment difficulties, especially after primary commodity prices began to decline in the 1950s, claimed increasing portions of national budgets. A generation of Latin Americans, led by Argentine Raul Prebisch, believed that modernization would lead to more "mature," stable economies and stave off encroaching socioeconomic instability. Although Prebisch and his cohort could offer few specific programs to achieve this modernization, their general ideas dovetailed nicely with those of a young American president who appeared prepared to countenance their demands for greater tariff protections, more access to U.S. markets, and equitable global commodity prices. At the start of the period, it appeared that real progress and, perhaps equally important, real assistance and trade from the developed world, would define a new status quo in Latin America.⁷

The political future of the hemisphere seemed equally unsettled. Castro's successful revolution against Batista highlighted similar vulnerabilities in Nicaragua, Guatemala, Bolivia, and the Dominican Republic. In 1961, Cuba served as both an alternative paradigm to old authoritarianism and an open protagonist of its own version of popular revolution.⁸ Conversely, on the right, the 1960s offered the dark possibility that reactionary dictatorship could construct a durable alternative to populist democracy. Armed and advised by the United States in opposition to Communist insurgencies, these regimes began the formation of new states defined by their access to and use of Western managerial techniques and modern military doctrine.⁹

NEW DEPARTURES IN SCHOLARSHIP

Explaining these events as they unfolded during the 1960s has occupied two generations of historians. Scholars have embraced the dichotomy of revolution and response and created an enormous body of work that has approached both topics from an impressive number of angles. Historians have studied revolutionary ideology as it evolved within the intellectual history of Latin America. They have addressed revolutionary leadership by reconstructing the biographies of its protagonists. They have examined the military as an institution to discover the internal motives that promoted its intervention in civilian affairs.¹⁰ Thousands of additional pages have been devoted to explaining the host of institutions created to contend with revolution. Scholars have addressed the Inter-American Development Bank, the Mutual Security Program, and the Central American Common Market.¹¹ They have broken apart assistance to Latin America from the perspective of the American agencies involved, as well as the U.S. and Latin American policy makers themselves.¹²

Fueling this scrutiny has been the declassification of thousands of linear feet of documents contained in federal archives relevant to the 1960s, a process that has opened up new areas of investigation into the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administrations.¹³ Research once focused on the crises of the decade, particularly regarding Cuba, Berlin, and the Vietnam War, has begun to broaden its examination of American foreign policy at the global and regional levels. Historians of Latin America have benefited from an accumulation of data generated by the Inter-American Development Bank and the Alliance for Progress, and from access to collections contained in the United States and archives abroad.

Modern scholarship reflects the benefit of this work. American diplomatic historians have succeeded in expanding the historical context of post-1945 American foreign policy. In *Guns and Butter*, Diane Kunz explores the difficulties confronted by the United States within the rapidly changing postwar global economic system of the 1960s. Her work juxtaposes the challenge of maintaining American global security commitments abroad with an unsuccessful struggle to develop an international economic policy worthy of the myriad problems of trade deficits, foreign aid, and currency stability.¹⁴ Recent scholarship has also offered international-relations paradigms outside the traditional context of U.S. hegemony. Steven J. Stern has expanded the conceptual boundaries of this topic by linking local Latin American rural work patterns and the evolution of labor movements with the world economic system.¹⁵

Contemporary examinations of Latin American history have made similar progress. Scholarship has been able to move beyond the initial proposals made by the dependency school thirty years ago to a more intricate understanding of Latin American political economy and economic-development policy. Hindsight and greater access to documentation have allowed authors to better evaluate some of the growth models proposed in the 1960s (e.g., import substitution industrialization), as well as the degree to which development was politicized by rival internal faction within Latin American society.¹⁶ Today we are better able to understand many of the internal dynamics that affected Latin American revolution. Recent documents released by the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, for example, point to a much more significant Chi-

nese sponsorship of dissidents in South America.¹⁷ The cumulative effect of this historical work has been to add many additional layers of understanding to local revolution and the indigenous response.

Two significant limits have emerged in the course of this study. The first is relevant to studies of the nature of revolution in Latin America. The subject itself invites analysis of a complex mosaic of causation. Yet too often historians attempt to explain revolution as a function of a specific cause: as part of the Cold War conflict, as part of regional animosities, as part of internal factionalism, or as part of a personal crusade. Each of these issues is rich in its own history and valuable, but hamstrung by the absence of perspective and a clear understanding of priority within the larger confines of the historical narrative.

A second limit exists with regard to our understanding of efforts to "capture" revolution in Latin America. Again, the study of this history has been handicapped by its focus on single protagonists. On too many occasions, historians have overdrawn the role of the American state and the relatively small circles of individuals who formulated policy at the expense of linking these actors to any external context. As Michael H. Hunt has observed, academic study often reverts to an effort to either vindicate or criticize the United States as a primary protagonist in a rather insular examination of international relations.¹⁸ Authors engaged in the debate between orthodox and revisionist scholarship of American intentions have often neglected integrating the study of U.S. foreign policy with its recipients. Historians, particularly those who study Latin America, have only recently begun to analyze the intermixing of perceptions, plans, and actual policies of participants on both sides of the foreign-policy equation.¹⁹

This book proposes to integrate the issues of revolution and response into a more holistic study of the United States and Latin America. It will introduce the issue of revolution from the international level, in the context of the Cold War, and carry it downward through intervening layers of national, regional, and local application. All the while, it will seek out points at which the various concepts of revolution overlapped, rebounded, and influenced the final definition of the idea. Soviet influence in Latin America during the 1960s, for example, is axiomatic. However, the various filters that communism traveled through, be they Nicaraguan, Cuban, or Bolivian, substantially changed what form of revolution communism inspired. Nor was communism the only fountainhead of revolution. Grassroots movements designed to challenge the status quo proliferated throughout Latin America during the 1960s.

The same degree of integration is necessary when examining efforts to "capture" revolution in Latin America. No one single level of assistance or intervention is adequate to understand the response to instability. International agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund blanketed the hemisphere by the 1960s. The United States advocated its own sponsorship through a host of civilian and military agencies. These were combined with regional and local institutions through the auspices of the Alliance for Progress. At the bottom of this vast pyramid were the labor unions, merchants associations, churches, political parties, and civic associations attempting to address the problem of revolution and its precursors. All of these respective layers must be addressed collectively in order to evaluate their goals, comparative influence upon each other, and effectiveness.

This multilayered approach will begin with the United States. For obvious reasons, it is impossible to discard America from any serious examination of the hemisphere. For the entirety of the 1960s, the United States assumed a contested but primary role in the political, military, and economic affairs of the hemisphere. In order to avoid sweeping generalizations of this particular actor, it is important to understand the epistemology of American policy and the eventual products of this thought, and, perhaps more important, to test policy against a broad spectrum of global, regional, and local environments. In this manner, the reader will have a better means to judge its effectiveness and evaluate the degree (or degrees) of U.S. influence upon Latin America.

Central America will serve as an intermediate level of analysis. The five nations of the isthmus fall within an area of traditional U.S. interests dating back to the nineteenth century. Central America also provides a coherent unit of comparative analysis that may be used to test both major revolutionary trends and the responses crafted to meet them. An analysis of this region will address Soviet influences upon revolutionary activity, Castro's attempt to export his own brand of rebellion, and local revolutionary movements such as the FSLN. Conversely, Central America also contains practical examples of U.S. assistance, local development policies, and collective economic and security programs.²⁰ Incorporating this regional approach may create a greater degree of Central American distinctiveness in the historical narrative, a process that will take into account the diverse nature of the five nations, internal frictions between them, and uncontrollable factors (e.g., the unforeseen problems of the Central American Common Market) that often militated against the intentions of both U.S. and Central American policy makers.²¹

Nicaragua will occupy the final rung of this analysis. In recent years, the country has attracted considerable scholarship, prompted by the historical interest of a generation of historians inspired by the Sandinista revolution.²² As is the case with U.S. and Latin American histories, the study of Nicaragua has also begun to press forward into the 1960s, the benefactor of greater access to primary sources. This has led historians to examine the successive post-Somoza Garcia regimes and devote considerable attention to the issues of political and military stability and development. A continuation of this work will allow the tandem topics of revolution and response to be pressed forward to a level of detail far beyond the international and regional approaches noted earlier. It will juxtaposition the grand ideas of the Alliance for Progress against important Nicaraguan internal developments, a path that will lead the historian and the reader through indigenous political maneuvering, personal rivalries, and Nicaragua's own many separate aspirations. It may also shed light on the degree to which the Somoza regime acted as an appendage of American policy or as its own distinct entity in the 1960s.²³

Before beginning this effort, it is important to establish the historical context for the events that would transpire in the 1960s. More specifically, it is critical to provide some degree of exposition for the ideas of revolution and response before introducing them in the year 1961. This presentation will briefly place the story in the earliest portion of Latin America's past.

THE REVOLUTION DEFINED

Sudden conflict in the service of change has defined Latin American history for centuries. It met Cortez in the accumulating rebellion that diminished the Aztecs and prepared the path toward the valley of Mexico. It preceded Pizarro in the form of a civil war that divided the great Inca empire. It left its mark on the internecine bloodshed immediately following the conquest of Peru, eventually producing a blood feud that cost the latter conquistador his life.²⁴

As colonial Latin America evolved, so to did the forms of strife within it. In many instances, it was the product of institutional conflict, from the friction produced in battles over jurisdiction. As the decades passed, the creole came to resent and rebel against the authority of the peninsulare. The church bridled at the control exercised by royal appointees and learned early on that popular violence could be used as a means to checkmate secular authority. The periodic *tumultos* scattered throughout the colonial period, perhaps the most famous being that which occurred in Mexico City in 1624, reflected a basic cognizance within the clergy that sedition could serve its purposes.²⁵ For the subdued native populations of Spanish America, revolt and rebellion were often the product of the rate of change forced upon local culture by the pace of later Bourbon reforms. Revolution, when it did come, served more often as a means to slow change rather than to increase its tempo.²⁶

The Age of Enlightenment added its own complex layer of new political ideology to the older distinctions of race, privilege, and religion. Although the concepts expressed by Locke, Rousseau, and Jefferson failed to reach the vast majority of Spanish Americans by the time of the French Revolution, they did significantly influence a generation of leaders, from Francisco Miranda, the "morning star of Spanish America," to Simón Bolívar, who served at the center of the challenge to Spanish monarchy. The Enlightenment proposed models of a utopian republic, with all its alternative mechanisms of reconstructing political power once it was captured from the crown. Latin Americans as widely separated in their vision of this new utopia as Bolívar and Francisco de Paula Santander agreed in principle that the sovereignty of the people, regardless of its actual form, was the foundation of the new Latin America. Perhaps even more important, the very concept of governance based upon public consent and the broad militarization of formerly disenfranchised social groups (particularly the mestizo majority in many countries) had begun to nurture a nascent form of nationalism, what Bolívar described as commonly held "patriotic ideals," lending Latin Americans a sense that revolution had become a consensual act with the concurrent expectation of greater participation in post-Independence governance.²⁷

The nineteenth century saw the nature of conflict in Latin America change yet again. In part, this stage of evolution was the product of the external pressures of the Industrial Revolution, which demanded a reordering of Latin American resources toward export-oriented economies. Latin American society found itself subordinated to foreign interests. This process saw the creation of a professional security apparatus to preserve stability and encourage new capital, alterations in civil law to encumber the public with obligations to the state, and the displacement of rural populations

from arable land. Combined, these changes produce widespread resentment that sometimes exploded into open rebellion. Nicaragua's passage of vagrancy laws and laws permitting the conscription of Indians for public labor led to the so-called War of the Comuneros in 1881, a conflict that eventually cost 5,000 lives.²⁸

In another sense, the nineteenth century also saw war employed to shape the political reconstruction of post-Independence Latin America. War between Peru and Gran Colombia in 1830 saw the end of the latter's grasp on Venezuela and Ecuador. For all its desire to avoid conflict, Buenos Aires was compelled by pressure from the public and elements of the military to intervene against the Brazilian occupation of its sister province, the Banda Oriental. Within the Central American isthmus, the creole elites who survived the post-Independence period scrambled to rebuild their region in a new, unified image. It was a short-lived project. The collapse of the United Provinces of Central America in 1841 resulted in years of internecine war dedicated to somehow reconstructing stability under the auspices of individual caudillos, such as Rafael Carrera (1839–1865) and Justo Rufino Barrio (1873–1885) of Guatemala and José Santos Zelaya of Nicaragua (1893–1910). The sponsorship of exile armies within the borders of rival Central American nations became an embedded, bitter tradition that persisted well into the twentieth century.²⁹

The new century saw the pace of change introduced during the post-Independence era accelerate. In the new modern age, Latin America found itself fully integrated into the global system of capital, a process that offered the enormous benefit of profits drawn from the commercial networks of multinational corporations, but at the cost of creating a vast, disenfranchised urban and rural proletariat. As the demands of modern capitalism placed additional stressors on Latin American society, host governments in the hemisphere compensated by modernizing and internationalizing their militaries, and soliciting military assistance from Germany, France, Great Britain, and the United States. The bloody repression that pervaded the first half of the twentieth century, particularly in Central America and the Caribbean, served as a testament to the effectiveness of these foreign advisory missions.

The ascendancy of the United States as the primary power in the Western Hemisphere placed additional, unprecedented pressures on Latin America. Not content with the quiet manner of commercial and financial influence that the British had brought to bear on Latin American affairs throughout the nineteenth century, American policy dedicated itself to redrawing the legal, cultural, and social substance of the region. Theodore Roosevelt's corollary to the Monroe Doctrine dealt not only with the question of Latin American indebtedness but also with the self-indulgence lifestyle of local elites who had produced it. The high-handed nature of this new hegemon rankled many Latin Americans and held portents for a backlash against U.S. power.³⁰

Revolution was also internationalized in the new modern age. Drawing from sources throughout the world, Latin Americans dissidents explored Marxism–Leninism, Socialism, Christian Democracy, and a host of alternative means to replace the status quo.³¹ In doing so, they recreated ideology in a form suited to their own particular needs. Augusto César Sandino recast antiimperialism, nationalism, and Marxism in his prolonged rural guerrilla war against the United States in the 1920s and early 1930s, and a new generation subsequently redeveloped them a quarter century later.³²

The study of Latin American revolution in the 1960s must be considered in the preceding context, as a late chapter in a history of conflict spanning five centuries. It is impossible to study the decade without including the heavy burden placed upon it by past tradition and long-established practice. The bitter conflicts that pervaded Central America after World War II, the endemic plotting, assassination attempts, and sponsorship of exile armies, hearkened back to a time when *personalismo* and long-established individual hatreds defined the basic course of war in the region.³³

This is not to say that Latin American revolution suffered from a lack of any contemporary influences during the 1960s. The deployment of nuclear weapons to Cuba certainly transformed the fundamental nature of the Cuban revolution as a threat to Latin America.³⁴ In fact, the Cuban Missile Crisis itself was emblematic of the latest historical event layered upon the many eras of Latin American warfare: the Cold War. The Cold War was the final step toward internationalizing Latin American revolution. It made any armed challenge to the hemispheric status quo not simply a disruption of capitalism or a threat to regional stability, but a component of a global bipolar conflict between superpowers. Latin Americans soon discovered that they were encompassed by the global imperatives of the United States and the Soviet Union. By 1962, Castro's revolution had become an appendage of Soviet strategic policy. Conversely, Latin America and its wealth of natural resources had existed as a component of American Cold War planning since the mid-1950s.³⁵

The challenge to the contemporary historian is to discern the impact of the past on revolutionary movements in the 1960s and establish the importance of modern factors that created their own unique influence during the decade. What formed revolutionary intent in 1961? To what extent did traditional animosities within the Latin American nations define revolution? To what extent were these submerged with the Cold War? What was the eventual outcome once local and global priorities were intersected?

In many respects, the history of Central America and Nicaragua in the 1960s serves as a valuable means to begin deciphering this story. The isthmus itself was ripped apart by revolutions after 1945. Fed by the high expectations for greater political freedom and prosperity that followed World War II and spurred on by the leadership of such figures as José Figueres, Fidel Castro, Carlos Fonseca Amador, and Yon Sosa, a diverse array of revolutionary movements sprang up throughout the region.

Similarly, during the postwar period the Somoza regime in Nicaragua struggled mightily to preserve itself against a revolutionary tide that had accounted for the demise of contemporary dictatorships in Guatemala, Cuba, and El Salvador. For years, the family successfully maintained a balancing act between the expectations of the ruling elite, the general population, and its own interests, while accepting World Bank reforms and U.S. military assistance. Yet it was never able to adapt quickly enough to completely stave off the specter of revolution. Once economic reforms began to take hold in the late 1950s, Castro's Cuba emerged to offer a new challenge to the Somoza regime. Others soon followed. Within Nicaragua itself a vital Christian Democratic movement began to take shape at the end of the decade, led by a young generation of Nicaraguans impatient with the political deal making that characterized the country's stratified political system. Finally, the decade also saw the reemer-

gence of Sandinismo, separable from Cuban Marxism by its reliance on Nicaragua's historical past, but definitely influenced by it. As these challenges multiplied, the successors to Anastasio Somoza García found themselves hard pressed to concoct policies necessary for the regime's survival.³⁶

CAPTURING THE REVOLUTION

As the nature of revolution evolved, efforts to prevent it adapted accordingly. Throughout most of the periods discussed, simple coercion was the method of choice used by Spanish viceroys and their later successors in the post-Independence era. In this context, leaders maintained order by using military and police powers as a blunt instrument to terrorize a population into compliance with state policies. Arguably, this tradition persisted far into the twentieth century as witnessed in post-1954 Guatemala, Chile after the 1973 coup against Allende, and El Salvador during its civil war in the 1980s.

Despite the longevity of these trends, the twentieth century did bring important changes to the methodology of resisting revolution. In the aftermath of World War II, policy makers sought not simply to react to instability but also to prevent its root causes. In Latin America as well as the United States, this conventional wisdom focused on the social, political, and economic underpinnings of dissent, making the case that once these problems were effectively addressed, stability would follow. The policy maker's goal, and in some respects his holy grail, was to decipher the requisite combination of military, political, and economic inputs necessary to engineer a modern country.

This structuralist approach was expressed by the nation-building theories of Walt W. Rostow, Max F. Millikan, and Adolf Berle and defined by the considerable success of the Marshall Plan (1947) in Western Europe. It shaped security policy for the next quarter century.³⁷ Consequently, the advisory missions from the United Nations, the World Bank, and the United States that proliferated throughout the world during the 1940s and 1950s attempted to recreate the Western European success story for a global array of new client nations in the Third World. In practice, however, this proved to be an extremely difficult goal from the very start. It was problematic in part because the various sponsors could never agree upon the appropriate means to pursue any one policy area. The Eisenhower administration battled constantly with the United Nations regarding the form economic development should take, preferring "hard" (short-term, high-interest) loans to "soft" (long-term, low-interest) loans or outright grants. Although the United States began to mitigate this position by the end of the 1950s, the basic friction that existed between sponsor agencies muddled efforts to reconstruct the non-Communist world.

Almost from the very start, Latin Americans contested U.S. Cold War priorities. American policy makers foremost sought security to counter what they perceived as a growing Communist threat to the hemisphere. In the 1950s, the United States primary military mission was the reinforcement of collective regional security under the auspices of the 1947 Rio Pact. Through the auspices of the Military Defense Assistance Program, dozens of military advisory missions were dispatched throughout the

region to train and modernize the Latin American military for hemispheric defense. These efforts were supplemented by internal security assistance (e.g., the Overseas Internal Security Program) that helped rebuild and update police capabilities to combat subversive activity.³⁸

In contrast, Latin Americans bridled at the low priority Washington assigned to postwar economic assistance for the hemisphere. They resented the extractive nature of U.S.–Latin American economic relations, one which had provided the United States with raw materials for commerce and strategic stockpiles (e.g., 65% of its bauxite) without reciprocal assistance for Latin American economic development.³⁹ Latin American policy makers such as Pedro Beltrán argued that technical aid via the Point Four Program (1949) was useful, but fell far short of the massive, comprehensive projects then available for European recovery. As time wore on, attacks on American capitalism increased. Juan Perón of Argentina lost few opportunities to denounce an economic status quo dominated from the north. In Central America, American multinational corporations such as the United Fruit Company became lightning rods for local discontent.⁴⁰

Faced with persistent U.S. footdragging as the 1950s wore on, Latin Americans began to construct their own departures from the contemporary economic system. Individual nations began to solicit capital investment from the recovering economies of Europe. Britain, France, Germany, and Italy eagerly responded, offering their new clients commercial credit on terms far better than the United States. Nations such as Nicaragua, which were ostensibly closely held within the American economic orbit, saw a dramatic change in their trade structure. Between 1951 and 1960, the U.S. share of Nicaraguan imports declined from 72.2 to 52.7 percent.⁴¹ Collectively, local policy makers began to organize, creating the Economic Commission for Latin America in 1950 and pursuing a series of regional integration plans designed to construct the Central American Common Market and the Latin American Free Trade Association.⁴²

From a much broader perspective, it appeared that the backlash initiated by American intervention at the start of the century had matured as it spread. For two decades, roughly from the start of World War II to the conclusion of the Eisenhower administration, American policy makers had attempted to reinforce U.S. control of the hemisphere by institutionalizing a broad spectrum of hemispheric affairs. By introducing itself into military affairs through the Rio Pact, inter-American relations via the Organization of American States (1948), and eventually economic development through its late-coming sponsorship of LAFTA and the CACM, the United States permeated virtually every facet of Latin American life.⁴³ From the perspective of the U.S. policy maker, these were proactive responses necessitated by the Cold War and, to an extent, by Latin American demands for greater attention. For many Latin Americans, however, the United States had become an intrusive, paternalistic power whose constant presence was something to dilute, if not avoid.

Such was the situation as it existed at the start of the 1960s. The challenge to the newly arrived Kennedy administration was twofold: First, it had to devise an effective means to halt the spread of Communism in Latin America, at that time a threat primarily identified with Castro's Cuba. The second half of the U.S. mandate was more difficult. In order to appropriately recapture leadership in the hemisphere,

Kennedy's brain trust had to face the accumulating expectations of Latin America, a process that not only required recognition of economic growth and stability, but also contained some tolerance of self-determination. Reflecting upon this dilemma thirty-seven years ago, Albert O. Hirschman remarked that American policy makers needed to understand that reform might never be entirely peaceful, nor did revolution always have to be violent.⁴⁴ How could the United States, for example, divine the difference between legitimate political reform and a Communist cat's-paw? The paradox confronting the United States was the need to sacrifice a certain degree of power in order to create a degree of stability.

Central America faced a similar set of problems at the start of the 1960s. Its stability was threatened by the stated objective of the Castro regime to spread revolution to the region. Skirmishes between guerrilla columns and Honduran, Nicaraguan, and Costa Rican forces peppered the isthmus in the early years of the decade. Open political conflict often accompanied rural war. In countries throughout Central America, students, unions, and fringe political parties took their case to the newspapers and the streets. Salvadoran student protests in 1960 were met with a bloody crackdown. During the 1963 Nicaragua elections, the Somoza regime responded to demonstrations with a greater degree of restraint. Conversely, Central American stability was sometimes threatened by the military itself. The Ydigoras government in Guatemala, for example, bore an unexpected cost for its close alignment with Washington in 1960, when junior officers rebelled against both rampant corruption and official support of Cuban exiles training for the Bay of Pigs invasion.⁴⁵ Security policy therefore had to face in two directions, one that placated the military with large budgets, modern equipment, and constant vigilance, the other addressing the growing rebel threat in the countryside.

Central American economic integration faced a similar balancing act. It offered the tantalizing possibility of new markets and future regional growth, but also exposed many more unanswered questions. What were the best means to shift an untrained, predominantly rural labor force into a manufacturing economy? How could individual countries modernize their infrastructures without bankrupting their treasuries? The Central American Common Market, still in its infancy at the start of the 1960s, faced far greater complexities. How would it address the economic imbalances that existed between more industrialized members (e.g., Nicaragua and Guatemala) and those who still lagged behind their neighbors (e.g., Honduras and El Salvador)?⁴⁶ How would it integrate industry on a regional scale? What conditions could it place on capital investment?

For its own part, Nicaragua entered the 1960s still reeling from the aftershocks of Anastasio Somoza García's 1956 assassination and subsequent challenges to his family's power. Exiles invasions threatened the country from its northern and southern borders. Political parties in opposition to the regime multiplied. Many old stalwarts in the Somozas' own Liberal Party openly questioned their ability to lead and prepared to challenge them in the upcoming 1963 presidential election. Overlaying this period of crisis was a significant decline in coffee and cotton prices, a trend that severely limited Managua's ability to assuage challenges as the elder Somoza had, with official and unofficial patronage. Although Luis and Anastasio "Tachito" Somoza Debayle

inherited the institutions constructed by their father, particularly the *Guardia Nacional*, they did not enjoy the same degree of loyalty that had bolstered the regime for years. On the eve of the Alliance for Progress, their mission was to reinvent themselves as well as their response to revolution.

For every party concerned, capturing the revolution in Latin America necessitated policies that could reconcile complex, often contradictory issues. The times presented a challenge that did not beg the absolutes normally associated with the Cold War era. Centuries of traditional practice, the hybridization of ideology, contemporary market trends, the personal agendas of both U.S. and Latin American leaders, and many other factors blurred the lines distinguishing disagreement from rebellion or reform from repression.⁴⁷ The pursuit of clarity derived from these factors became the defining mission of a decade.

NOTES

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