

tie the economic systems of the individual Latin American republics even more closely to the American economy, the training and equipping of national constabularies to suppress social insurrection against pro-American regimes, and financial assistance to autocratic governments to balance budgets and stabilize currencies—these were the alternative means for perpetuating American hegemony once the employment of direct military force and financial control were abandoned.



General Cesar Augusto Sandino (1895–1934). Sandino and his followers harassed U.S. marines who sought to bolster the conservative government of Nicaragua from 1927 to 1934. After his assassination in 1934 by agents of the head of the country's national guard, Anastasio Somoza Garcia (1896–1956), Sandino became a cult hero among Nicaraguan opponents of the Somoza family and their U.S. allies.

The experiences of Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic furnish typical illustrations of this evolution from direct to indirect control. The United States had retained military forces in Nicaragua from 1912 to 1933 (except for a brief interlude in 1925–26). During the last years of the American occupation, U.S. officials trained and equipped a national guard to assume the function of preserving internal security upon the withdrawal of American troops. After the American evacuation in 1934, Cesar Augusto Sandino, leader of the rebel forces that had been harassing American marines throughout the twenties, signed a truce with the Nicaraguan government only to be murdered by members of the national guard. Two years later the head of the American-trained security forces, General Anastasio Somoza, seized power and instituted a dictatorial regime that brutally repressed revolutionary elements in the country and maintained close relations with the United States. The Somoza family remained in power either directly or through surrogates until being overthrown by the ideological heirs of Sandino in 1979.

A similar transfer of power from American military occupation authorities to a U.S.-trained indigenous elite occurred in the Dominican Republic. Having ruled that nation under martial law since 1916, the United States withdrew its military forces in 1924 after establishing a national constabulary to replace the departing marines. In 1930 General Raphael Trujillo, who had moved up the ranks of the national guard to become its chief in 1928, assumed the presidency after a fraudulent electoral campaign. With the financial assistance of American sugar interests, the National City Bank, and the government in Washington, Trujillo ruled his country with an iron fist for the next thirty-one years until his assassination in 1961. Within a few days after Pearl Harbor all four of the former American protectorates—Nicaragua, Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic—displayed their continuing loyalty to the United States by declaring war on Japan, Italy, and Germany.

In conclusion, it may be said that Franklin Roosevelt abandoned the “big stick” first wielded by his cousin in the years before World War I for a number of economic and strategic reasons. First of all, the economic recovery of the United States in the depths of the Depression required guaranteed and continuous access to the raw materials and markets of Latin America. This became all the more important as the revival of economic nationalism and the increased likelihood of war in Europe and Asia threatened to disrupt American trade with those distant continents. Second, the rearmament of Germany, not to speak of the increasing belligerence of Italy and Japan, revived the long-dormant issue of foreign interference in the Americas. To counter this new menace posed by the informal “unholy alliance” of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan, the United States sought to strengthen the peacekeeping machinery of the Pax Americana. But the traditional methods of military coercion and diplomatic intimidation had been rendered increasingly difficult to countenance in the face of sustained resistance from the Latin American republics and the accusations of hypocrisy from the world community. By substituting indirect for direct methods of hemispheric domination, the Roosevelt administration cast off the embarrassing albatross of old-fashioned imperialism. It was thereafter free to act as the defender of peace and national sovereignty in the world at large as well as to mobilize its clients in Latin America in a hemispheric security system based on the voluntary cooperation of juridically equal nations.

Foreign Threats and Hemispheric Solidarity

After the announcement of German rearmament and the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, the United States government launched its first initiative aimed at establishing a system of hemispheric solidarity amid the collapse of collective security across the Atlantic. On January 30, 1936, President Roosevelt proposed the convocation of a special inter-American conference to devise procedures for protecting the western hemisphere from the new threat to world peace brewing in Europe. At this conference, held in Buenos Aires in December 1936, the American and Argentinian delegations clashed over the question of how such hemispheric security could best be assured. Foreign Minister Carlos Saavedra Lamas of Argentina, the leading proponent of Latin American resistance to United States domination, trotted out a proposal for cooperation with the League of Nations to implement sanctions against aggressor states anywhere in the world. Predictably, the Argentine plan struck at the very heart of the Pan-American ideology propounded by the United States. It linked the security of the western hemisphere to the international organization headquartered in Europe, dominated by the European powers and repudiated by the United States. The American plan, introduced by Secretary of State Cordell Hull, preserved the principle of Pan-Americanism by seeking to organize the republics of the Americas in a common defense of hemispheric security. It proposed the creation of an inter-American consultative committee comprising the foreign ministers of the twenty-one republics, which would be authorized to hold consultations during international emergencies. In the event of war involving any of the member states, the neutral nations of the Americas would be obliged to enforce an embargo of credits and arms supplies on all belligerents.

Determined Argentine opposition to this United States effort to circumvent the League of Nations by establishing an exclusively inter-American security system resulted in the passage of a seemingly innocuous compromise: The principle of mutual consultation in the event of a threat to the peace of the Americas was embodied in the Treaty for the Maintenance, Preservation, and Reestablishment of Peace, but no institution was designated to hold such consultations, and the obligation to embargo credits and munitions to belligerents was dropped. The absence of effective peacekeeping machinery notwithstanding, the mere affirmation of the principle of inter-American consultation represented a significant victory for Washington in its diplomatic confrontation with Buenos Aires. It established the precedent for the policy of hemispheric neutrality and collective defense that was later to be adopted by the American states at the outbreak of war in Europe. The price that the United States had to pay for this unanimous declaration of hemispheric solidarity was the Special Protocol Relative to Non-Intervention, which overrode the Hull reservation to the Montevideo resolution by prohibiting any of the signatories from intervening "directly or indirectly, and for whatever reason," in the internal or external affairs of the others. It was unimaginable that the United States, which was earnestly endeavoring to mobilize its Latin American clients against the menace of aggression from abroad, could cling to the last vestige of its own prerogative to violate their national sovereignty. The abrogation of all of the treaty rights authorizing United States military intervention and financial supervision in the Caribbean by the end of the 1930s fulfilled the solemn promises of the Buenos Aires protocol.

In the two years after the Buenos Aires Conference of December 1936, the deteriorating political situation in Europe underlined the necessity of institutionalizing the principle of hemispheric security that had been endorsed by the American republics.



A Dominican strongman visits Washington, July 1939. General Raphael Trujillo served as President of the Dominican Republic from 1930 to 1938 and 1942 to 1952 before simply ruling without a political title until his assassination in 1961. Temporarily out of office, but still holding the reins of power, he came to Washington on the eve of the outbreak of the Second World War in Europe in response to President Roosevelt's plea to Latin American leaders for hemispheric cooperation.

The failure of the League of Nations to restrain Italian aggression in East Africa and the inability of Great Britain and France to halt German revisionism in Central Europe raised the possibility of a new European war that would inevitably affect the economic and strategic interests of the western hemisphere. Most ominous of all was the apparent increase of Axis-inspired subversion in those Latin American states, such as Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay, with substantial numbers of first-generation immigrants from Germany and Italy. Hitler's agents had seized control of the major organizations and publications of the Latin Americans of German descent. In some cases German immigrants were blackmailed into serving the Nazi cause under the threat of reprisals against their relatives at home. The resulting upsurge of subversive activity in these countries was accompanied by a propaganda broadside launched from Berlin in the form of radio broadcasts, press subsidies, and cultural exchange programs that was aimed at promoting Latin American support for German foreign policy. In the meantime, the Nazi regime made a determined effort to improve Germany's economic position in the region through the granting of foreign credits to and the conclusion of barter agreements with a number of Latin American states.

In the aftermath of the Munich Conference, the Roosevelt administration began to exert pressure on the Latin American republics to tighten the bonds of hemispheric solidarity in the face of the threat of war in Europe and the increase in German political and economic activity in the Americas. At the Eighth Conference of the American

States in Lima, Peru, in December 1938, Secretary of State Hull obtained unanimous consent to a pledge of joint cooperation to defend against "all foreign intervention or activity" that might threaten any of the twenty-one American republics. To facilitate the process of joint consultation endorsed at the Buenos Aires Conference, a consultative organ composed of the foreign ministers of the signatory states was formed to handle emergencies. As was customary, Argentina resisted this United States-inspired movement toward closer hemispheric cooperation and held out for the maintenance of close relations with Europe; but the mounting anxiety in Latin America about the threat of a European war enabled Secretary Hull to win the day while the Argentine delegate remained incommunicado after having prematurely stalked out of the conference.

The consultative machinery established by the Declaration of Lima was first put into operation in response to the outbreak of the European war in September 1939. The first ad hoc meeting of the foreign ministers, held in Panama September 23 to October 3, 1939, produced a series of recommendations that were unmistakably detrimental to the Axis and favorable to the Anglo-French cause. These included the proscription of domestic activities on behalf of any belligerent state (a measure aimed at German and Italian nationals residing in Latin America) as well as the revision of maritime legislation to enable neutral ports in the western hemisphere to receive armed merchant ships (thereby affording an advantage to Great Britain's large surface fleet) and to exclude belligerent submarines (thereby discriminating against the principal naval weapon of Germany). Less successful was the Panama conference's designation of a neutral zone around the western hemisphere extending several hundred miles from shore as far north as Canada. This presumptuous redefinition of the laws of naval warfare deterred none of the European belligerents as they launched the Battle of the Atlantic in the winter of 1939–40.

In addition to passing these blatantly anti-Axis resolutions, the Panama conference strengthened the existing machinery of hemispheric solidarity by creating an inter-American Financial and Advisory Committee to promote economic cooperation among the American republics. Behind the euphemism of inter-American cooperation lay a concerted (and ultimately successful) campaign waged by the United States to reduce Latin American trade with the Axis powers and to reserve for itself the markets and the strategic raw materials of the region. This American effort to forge a hemispheric economic bloc was the culmination of a long and bitter trade dispute that had threatened to undermine United States commercial predominance in Latin America. During the second half of the 1920s, the traditionally protectionist Republican administrations in Washington had resisted Latin American initiatives, led by Argentina, to eradicate artificial trade barriers (such as the notorious sanitary prohibition that excluded most Argentine beef from the American market). The Hawley-Smoot Tariff of 1930 placed additional obstacles in the path of Latin American exports to the United States. This upsurge of American protectionism ultimately forced many of the states of Latin America (with Argentina typically leading the way) to turn to Europe for alternative trading partners. The Roca Convention of May 1, 1933, established a privileged commercial relationship between Argentina and the British Empire (which had recently been reorganized into a virtually closed economic bloc by the imperial preference agreements signed in Ottawa in the summer of 1932). Great Britain agreed to purchase a prescribed annual quantity of Argentine beef and grain in return for

assurances that Argentina would spend the proceeds from these sales on British manufactured products. This preferential trade arrangement, which adversely affected both American agricultural exports to Britain and American exports of manufactured goods to Argentina, was followed by other bilateral commercial agreements between various Latin American states and the increasingly closed economic systems controlled by Britain, France, and Germany.

It was in response to this threat to inter-American commercial relationships that American Secretary of State Hull promoted his pet project for the reciprocal lowering of trade barriers to revive foreign commerce in the midst of the Depression. Though originally proposed to all of the major trading partners of the United States, the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the European powers (which were busy forming autarkic trade zones out of the extensive territory under their political control) caused Hull to concentrate on reducing trade barriers between the United States and the twenty other American republics. The American secretary of state tirelessly pressed for the adoption of reciprocity at the conferences of the American states, first in Montevideo in 1933, and with even more determination after the passage by the United States Congress of the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act in June 1934, which authorized the president to negotiate reciprocal reductions in tariff duties with individual countries. During the last half of the 1930s a number of such bilateral agreements were signed with the nations of Latin America. This lowering of barriers to trade, together with the extension of commercial credits by the Export-Import Bank, forged a tight-knit commercial relationship between the United States and its Latin American clients that intensified the economic solidarity of the western hemisphere.

The sudden collapse of the Low Countries and France in May–June 1940 presented the first direct challenge to the security and neutrality of the Americas. The uncertain fate of the Dutch and French possessions in the Caribbean and on the northeast coast of South America raised the unnerving possibility of Germany's extorting rights to bases in this region from the helpless Dutch and French authorities. To avert such an eventuality, the U.S. Congress passed a joint resolution on June 18, 1940, reaffirming America's traditional opposition to the transfer of territory in the western hemisphere from one non-American power to another. The hastily convened second conference of foreign ministers of the American states, held in Havana July 21–30, 1940, endorsed the "no transfer" principle and authorized the seizure and joint administration by the American republics of any European possession judged to be in danger of falling into hostile hands. The most momentous act of the Havana conference was the Declaration of Reciprocal Assistance and Cooperation for the Defense of the Americas, which defined an act of aggression by a non-American state against any one of the twenty-one republics as an act of aggression against them all. This declaration in effect represented the formal multilateralization of the Monroe Doctrine. The principle of regional collective security, based on the mutual consent of the twenty-one American republics, thereby replaced the unilateral prerogative of the United States to prevent foreign intervention in the hemisphere.

Bilateralism Trumps Multilateralism

The Declaration of Reciprocal Assistance enabled Washington to proceed with its plans to organize the defense of the Americas in the face of the Axis threat. The way in which

hemispheric defense was to be managed became a subject of intense debate within the Roosevelt administration in the year before Pearl Harbor. The State Department, led by Undersecretary Sumner Welles, advocated the extension of the multilateral principle underlying the Good Neighbor Policy to the realm of regional military cooperation. Such an approach would furnish a solid foundation for the recent trend toward hemispheric unity in political and economic matters by giving all twenty Latin republics an equal stake in the cause of regional defense. The War and Navy departments preferred to organize the defense of the Americas on the basis of the United States' own special security requirements as defined by its service chiefs. This implied a series of privileged bilateral military relationships with a handful of countries (Mexico, Panama, Ecuador, and Brazil) strategically situated along the southern extension of the United States' defense perimeter (which was thought to run from the Galapagos Islands eastward to the Brazilian bulge). This approach would avoid overextending American resources to the peripheral southern portion of Latin America, which in any case contained two countries (Argentina and Chile) that maintained relatively cordial relations with the Axis powers and therefore were unlikely to be reliable partners in a hemisphere-wide security system led by the United States. It would permit military planners in Washington to concentrate on the two most pressing objectives of American strategy: the defense of the Pacific approaches to the Panama Canal against Japan and the protection of Brazil's northeastern bulge from the potential naval threat from bases that Germany might obtain in French West Africa.

Even before the entry of the United States in the Second World War, it became apparent that American military authorities were prevailing in their bureaucratic struggle with the advocates of a genuinely multilateral or collective security system for the defense of the hemisphere. The Roosevelt administration concluded bilateral defense agreements with the strategically situated republics within the United States' defense perimeter. Bilateral commissions modeled on the United States-Canadian Joint Board of Defense were established with Mexico and Brazil to coordinate those two countries' contribution to hemispheric defense. Negotiations were begun with Brazil and several states in the Caribbean region to secure air and naval base facilities for the United States to supplement those obtained in the British possessions in the new world by virtue of the destroyers-for-bases exchange of September 1940. American military and naval missions were dispatched southward to assist the individual states in their defense preparations while Latin American army and navy officers were invited to either the United States or the Panama Canal Zone for training. Lend-Lease agreements for the delivery of military supplies were eventually signed with every Latin American nation except Argentina and Panama (which received American aid under a separate arrangement for the protection of the Canal Zone).

Washington's success in assuming the role of the sponsor of strategic and economic coordination in the western hemisphere was facilitated by the common sentiment of danger from Axis-controlled Europe that gripped the ruling elites of Latin America after the fall of the Low Countries and France. That sense of a foreign menace, together with the abandonment of overt coercion within the hemisphere by the United States, secured the cooperation of the Latin American republics (always excepting Argentina) in the cause of hemispheric solidarity that was championed and dominated by the senior partner to the north.

Latin American Support for the U.S. War Effort

This is not to suggest that this wartime expansion of America's hegemonic position in its hemisphere occurred without any resistance on the part of the weaker nations to the south. Even two such pro-American states as Brazil and Panama, for example, dragged out for many years their negotiations with the United States for base rights on their territory. But the behavior of Latin America as a whole after the United States' entry in the Second World War exhibited a cooperative spirit unprecedented in the history of inter-American relations. In contrast to the First World War, all twenty republics of Latin America eventually followed the United States into war, although Chile and Argentina held out until the last minute. At the third conference of foreign ministers in Rio de Janeiro, January 15–28, 1942, all of the American republics except Argentina and Chile severed diplomatic relations with the Axis powers, undertook to cooperate in the suppression of German espionage in the Americas, and adopted an extensive program of inter-American economic coordination and the pooling of strategic materials. Strategically located states such as Ecuador, Brazil, and the Caribbean republics eventually furnished base facilities to American military and naval forces, which accommodated over 100,000 United States troops by the end of the war.

These developments collectively reflected the unequal distribution of inter-American military and economic power that had been evident for so long. Notwithstanding the ubiquitous references to multilateral cooperation and collective security in the rhetoric of American officials concerned with Latin America during the war, the Roosevelt administration engineered the military buildup in the western hemisphere according to the specific strategic requirements of the United States. The most notable exception to the general trend toward bilateralism in the United States' security relations with its Latin American clients was the establishment in 1942 of the Inter-American Defense Board. But that sole surviving symbol of the State Department's original project for multilateral hemispheric defense was reduced to an innocuous advisory role as the United States military establishment pursued its preferred policy of bilateral links with the military elites of the individual states to the south.

Though Brazil sent an infantry division to the Italian theater in the summer of 1944, and the Mexican air force flew in support of U.S. infantry in the Philippines in the spring of 1945, Latin America's most important contribution to the war effort was economic rather than military. Under the procurement programs drawn up by the War Department in Washington, the Latin nations were induced to step up production of raw materials essential to the struggle against the Axis and to export them northward at artificially low prices in exchange for the provision of Export-Import Bank loans. This emergency program of wartime production led to the almost total reorientation of the economies of the Latin American states toward the United States, placing them in a position of great dependence on the American market for the specific strategic commodities involved. Once the demand for these war-related exports abruptly declined after 1945, most of the supplier countries were condemned to endure a painful readjustment to peacetime conditions. In the meantime, the reciprocal trade agreements (which reduced Latin American tariff barriers to United States exports) and Export-Import Bank loans strengthened the bilateral commercial ties between each of the individual Latin American countries and their powerful and prosperous neighbor to the north at the expense of the region's former trading partners in war-torn Europe and

Asia. Thus the Second World War and the intense inter-American cooperation it generated reinforced the long-term trend toward United States dominance of economic relations in its hemisphere and launched the process of bilateral military cooperation between the armed services of the individual Latin states and their sources of military aid and training in Washington.

CHAPTER 7

The Rise and Fall of Japan's Supremacy in East Asia



Japan's Emperor Hirohito (1901–1989) on horseback, reviewing his troops in northern China, 1933: Historians still debate whether the emperor was an ally or a tool of the militaristic faction in Tokyo that launched Japan's aggressive campaign against China in the 1930s. His public image was radically transformed after World War II from strutting militarist to grandfatherly constitutional monarch.