

BOOK REVIEW ESSAY

Revisiting the Cold War in Latin America

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This essay reviews the following works:

Rivalry and Alliance Politics in Cold War Latin America. By Christopher Darnton. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014. Pp. ix + 285. \$44.95 paper. ISBN: 9781421413617.

Neither Peace nor Freedom: The Cultural Cold War in Latin America. By Patrick Iber. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015. Pp. 1 + 327. \$39.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780674286047.

Mexico's Cold War: Cuba, the United States, and the Legacy of the Mexican Revolution. By Renata Keller. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015. Pp. xix + 274. \$103.00 cloth. ISBN: 9781107079588.

Back Channel to Cuba: The Hidden History of Negotiations between Washington and Havana. By William M. LeoGrande and Peter Kornbluh. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014. Pp. xiv + 524. \$25.00 paper. ISBN: 9781469617633.

Reagan and Pinochet: The Struggle over U.S. Policy toward Chile. By Morris Morley and Chris McGillion. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015. Pp. xiii + 338. \$35.99 paper. ISBN: 9781107458093.

Although much of the Cold War played out between the United States and Soviet Union in the European theater, the general outlines of Latin America's Cold War experience are well known, too. As a peripheral arena in the broader East–West contest, the Cold War in Latin America pitted the United States and its anticommunist but often undemocratic regional allies against real and perceived Soviet proxies in Cuba, Chile, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and beyond. While America's intervention and containment policies targeted its ideological opponents in the Western Hemisphere, regional anticommunist regimes encouraged, installed, or supported by Washington employed implements of repression against subversives real and imagined: campesinos, dissidents, innocents, leftists, politicians and political parties, students, and workers bore the brunt of these efforts, often with devastating effects.¹

The books reviewed here neither replicate nor supplant this traditional narrative. Instead, they tell us a great deal we did not already know about this period, or knew imperfectly. Along the way, they enrich the literature of several fields of inquiry, unearth new insights into the Cold War drama, and reveal that Latin American actors retained and exercised an agency that conventional wisdom sometimes obscures under presumed US dominance. Their analysis benefits from extensive archival and field research, the declassification of documents in the United States and other countries, and sometimes rigorous theorizing. The result is an array of themes and topics that will resonate with historians, humanities scholars, policy analysts, and social scientists alike.

Cold War Inter-American Relations

The first of these books—Christopher Darnton's *Rivalries and Alliance Politics in Cold War Latin America*—focuses less on examining the Cold War than on using the Cold War context of inter-American relations to unravel an intriguing foreign policy question: Why do rivalries between states persist in the

¹ See, for example, Peter H. Smith, *Talons of the Eagle: Latin America, the United States, and the World*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); and Stephen G. Rabe, *The Killing Zone: The United States Wages Cold War in Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

face of a common threat, and under what conditions do such rivalries end to yield more cooperative relations? Toward this end, Darnton examines the relationships of eleven Latin American states from the 1940s through the 1980s: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. Each was allied with one another—and with the United States—via the 1947 anticommunist Rio Treaty. Yet, despite confronting a common threat, intra-alliance rivalries that predated the Cold War continued; and while some states eventually achieved rapprochement, others failed despite having similar incentives (a common threat) to do so.

Darnton explains these outcomes by assessing the degree to which key state institutions opposed rapprochement and the conditions under which their opposition gave way to support. This focus is important, since even when national leaders *want* to end a rivalry and take steps toward this goal, parochial interests embedded in powerful state bureaucracies—especially the military and foreign ministry—can thwart these endeavors.

State institutions do not perpetuate rivalries out of blind belligerence or even because of the actual grievances involved, but rather because they derive parochial benefits from the policies associated with these contests and “thus develop a vested interest in maintaining rivalry and blocking rapprochement” (7). Such benefits include enhanced stature for these agencies within the state, greater autonomy and policy influence, and of course, budgetary resources. Since rapprochement threatens the benefits these agencies capture through rivalry policies, they become “guardians of the status quo” (14). As such, they resist and undermine efforts by national leaders to retire interstate rivalries, and only cease their opposition when both states engaged in rivalry face a new common threat that provides guardian agencies an “alternative mission” to their historic rivalry, or when these states’ economic resources are so constrained that guardian agencies cannot embrace the new mission while retaining the old.

Darnton outlines the parochial interest theory in Chapters 1 and 2, then applies it to various case studies. The Argentina–Brazil case receives extensive attention. Although presidential summits in 1947, 1961, and 1972 all sought rapprochement, guardian agencies repeatedly blocked these efforts. Only when the oil shocks of 1973 and 1979 constrained these states’ resources dramatically—and a new common threat of insurgency created an alternative mission of internal security—did guardian agencies curb their interest in the rivalry enough that national leaders could fashion a durable, cooperative bilateral relationship.

A similar pattern unfolded in rivalries between Central American, Andean, and Southern Cone states. Cuba’s revolution inspired insurgencies and copycat rebellions, which posed a new common threat to Central American states, while providing their militaries an alternative mission to historic rivalries. Yet only Honduras and Nicaragua managed to end their long-standing rivalry (stemming from a territorial dispute) and achieve rapprochement. Between 1959 and 1961, the Honduran and Nicaraguan presidents signed an Accord on Territorial Asylum that addressed the threat of insurgents using the disputed region to launch attacks against either regime, accepted a ruling on their land dispute by the International Court of Justice, and finally cemented a new era of fraternal relations at a 1961 presidential summit.

By contrast, during the same period (1959 to 1961) and despite having similar incentives to put their rivalries away and confront their common insurgency threat, El Salvador and Honduras failed to do so, as did Costa Rica and Nicaragua. What made the difference between reconciliation and continued rivalry, Darnton contends, was the dearth of resources Honduras and Nicaragua had to continue their rivalry *and* address the new threat. By comparison, the more prosperous El Salvador and Costa Rica felt less compelled to accept this policy trade-off.

Andean and Southern Cone rivalries displayed similar dynamics during the 1980s debt crisis. Buried under mountains of external debt, national economies contracted, development plans stalled, poverty increased, unemployment spiked, and economic hardship battered households. In the process, the crisis imposed enormous economic constraints on states’ resources. Yet under these conditions only one dyadic rivalry—Argentina and Chile—was abandoned and rapprochement achieved, whereas rivalries between Ecuador and Peru, Colombia and Venezuela, and Bolivia and Chile remained unresolved. Darnton argues that what made the difference between a rivalry’s termination or perpetuation was whether both parties to the rivalry experienced the dual impact of resource constraints and an alternative mission for their armed forces; the presence of merely one factor was insufficient. Thus, in the Southern Cone where the Argentine and Chilean militaries faced leftist insurgencies and had developed internal security missions in response, the debt crisis forced policy trade-offs that saw the military accept bilateral rapprochement. In the Andean Ridge countries, where insurgency threats had not risen uniformly, only the militaries of one party to a given rivalry had devised new internal security missions: in Peru but not Ecuador, Colombia but not Venezuela, and

Chile but not Bolivia. In these latter cases, the presence of economic constraints alone proved insufficient to facilitate rapprochement, and efforts to achieve bilateral reconciliation bore no fruit.

There are many things to admire about *Rivalries and Alliance Politics in Cold War Latin America*. Unlike some works, it offers a refreshing view of Cold War relations between Latin American countries themselves, rather than primarily with the United States. It is ambitious in scope, theoretically rigorous, and clearly written. It is a fine work of qualitative political science whose hypotheses are empirically tested. It exposes readers to data mined from institutional archives, and its extensive treatment of the Argentina–Brazil case reveals intriguing inner workings of these countries' militaries and foreign ministries. Both historians and political scientists will find value in reading this book, although they may not be fully convinced by Darnton's argument.

Renata Keller also explores Cold War inter-American relations in her book *Mexico's Cold War: Cuba, the United States, and the Legacy of the Mexican Revolution*. This well-researched, insightful volume shines a bright light on how Mexico navigated the mid to late decades of the Cold War (roughly 1959 through the mid-1980s). In the shadows of the Cuban Revolution, US–Cuban estrangement, and increasing domestic discontent with the atrophy of its own revolution, Mexico's government crafted a triangular foreign policy between itself, Cuba, and the United States. Under presidents Adolfo López Mateos, Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, and Luis Echeverría this policy resembled the type of two-level game first modeled by Robert D. Putnam.² At one level, it engaged foreign actors, specifically Cuba and the United States; at another, it targeted domestic actors, particularly leftist critics of Mexico's increasingly ossified revolution.

Keller persuasively documents the need for this two-level enterprise. On the one hand, like other Latin American states, Mexico faced US pressure to isolate Cuba diplomatically and confront the Castro government; yet bowing to this pressure would contradict its long diplomatic tradition of respecting states' internal affairs. On the other hand, Cuba's revolution laid bare the lethargy of Mexico's own "institutionalized" revolution led by the increasingly conservative Institutionalized Revolutionary Party (PRI). This gave fodder to domestic critics who questioned the government's revolutionary bona fides and, the government feared, gave inspiration to dissidents that might seek to emulate Cuba's experience. Such dynamics generated a "cold war" inside Mexico itself between the government and the Left.

Mexico's response to these external and internal pressures aimed to defend the government's domestic legitimacy while quieting US concerns. Resisting Washington's urgings to sever ties with Havana, López Mateos expressed sympathy and solidarity with the Cuban revolution and publicly defended Cuba, hoping to shore up the PRI's revolutionary credentials, protect its political capital, and inoculate it against domestic critiques. Privately, however, his government spied on Cuban activities and Mexican Cuba sympathizers and shared this intelligence with Washington. It also worked closely with US intelligence operatives in Mexico as it monitored and ultimately repressed leftist dissidents. When López Mateos left office in 1964, his successors continued this Janus-faced policy.

Mexico's Cold War makes several contributions to our understanding of that country's Cold War experience. Drawing extensively on archives from both Mexico's intelligence agencies and Cuba's Foreign Ministry, it underscores the deep concerns Mexican authorities harbored over possible Cuba-sponsored subversion and Cuban-inspired radicalization inside Mexico, and demonstrates that Cuba was not deceived by Mexico's outward display of revolutionary fraternalism. While Cuban newspapers celebrated Mexico's 1964 refusal to break economic and diplomatic ties with Havana, and Fidel Castro lauded President Mateos's decision on this point, Cuba's Foreign Ministry labeled Mexico's revolution a "democratic-bourgeois revolution" that cynically had "been departing every day more from its original postulates" (163).

Moreover, the book thoroughly debunks the romanticized idea that Mexico's refusal to follow the US foreign policy lead was based solely on deeply held principles of nonintervention and respect for other states' sovereignty. In reality, for Mexican leaders the domestic political capital gained from rebuffing the United States and from expressing solidarity with Cuba was equally important. Similarly, it discredits any notion that Mexico's policy choices were largely determined by the United States. The book also paints a clearer picture of Mexico's Cold War role. Keller reveals that Mexico, far from being a minor player, was a locus of Cold War intelligence, espionage, and foreign policy intrigue (including Lee Harvey Oswald's interactions with Cuban and Soviet embassy officials shortly before President John F. Kennedy's assassination). Its tradition of welcoming foreign political exiles—which preceded the Cold War—set the stage for wide-ranging

² See Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization* 42 (1988): 427–460.

skulduggery, revolutionary scheming, and cloak-and-dagger operations once the Cold War began. Keller's depiction of how Mexico responded to challenges is also valuable; it did so pragmatically and shrewdly, rather than in lock step with a professed ideology, out of rigid sentiments of revolutionary solidarity, or as a puppet of its powerful northern neighbor.

The Cultural Cold War

Patrick Iber examines the Cold War through a different lens in his impressive book *Neither Peace nor Freedom: The Cultural Cold War in Latin America*. Drawing on a vast array of primary and secondary sources from Latin American countries and the United States, Iber analyzes how leftist cultural icons, artists, and intellectuals struggled to advance their vision of a more just society with the aid of institutions created and funded by the Cold War's major protagonists.

Hoping to burnish their own soft power and influence international opinion, the superpowers created front organizations to promote cultural exchange, sponsor conferences, subsidize magazines and book publications, and support the works of leftist opinion molders. The Soviet Union opened this new Cold War front via its World Peace Council (WPC) and was soon countered by the US Central Intelligence Agency's Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF). Each sought to enlist "the persuasive weight of 'authentic,' local voices" to articulate or reinforce "the messages of Cold War powers" (20). Those messages could not have been more distinct. The WPC held that peace corresponded to the interests of the Soviet Union, whose system and expanding communist offspring were contested and threatened by Western, capitalist imperialism led by the United States; by contrast, the CCF held that totalitarian systems marked the death of liberty, freedom of thought, and organic cultural expression. Across Latin America, leftist artists and intellectuals of different stripes worked within these institutions to advance their own political ideas, support their work, and promote their personal agendas.

Among those affiliated with the WPC were Argentine writer María Rosa Oliver, Brazilian novelist Jorge Amado, Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, Mexican painter Diego Rivera, and Uruguayan literary critic Emir Rodríguez Monegal. Among the anticommunist Left whose efforts the CCF supported were Mexican playwright Alfonso Reyes, Peruvian philosopher and politician Raúl Haya de la Torre, Uruguayan poet Sara de Ibáñez, Venezuelan writer and ex-president Rómulo Betancourt, and the exiled Spanish writer Julián Gorkin. Scores of lesser luminaries from Latin America (too numerous to enumerate) participated in each camp's crusade and populate Iber's narrative.

Yet the story that *Neither Peace nor Freedom* tells is not about any of these individuals per se; nor is it a story of how the superpowers manipulated Latin American intellectuals for their own advantage. Rather, it is a story of conflict within the global Left that pitted anticommunist leftists against anti-anticommunist leftists—a conflict that preceded the Cold War but was imprinted onto the East–West struggle once it began. It is about a struggle between members of competing leftist intellectual communities inside Latin America: those who saw peace imperiled by an imperialistic, warmongering United States with nuclear first-strike capabilities, and those who staunchly opposed dictatorship and totalitarianism and sought a more just world by balancing socialism and democracy (i.e., social democrats). Finally, it is a story of poignant irony, in that commitment to either the WPC or CCF undercut both communities' moral positions and rendered them complicit in broader imperial arrangements that fostered injustice. Anticommunist leftists could not countenance free speech and association for local communist writers, and wound up cooperating with the country whose transgressions against Latin American self-determination they rightly abhorred. Meanwhile, anti-anticommunist leftists failed to criticize the destruction of freedoms practiced by Stalin and, later, the repression required by Soviet-style totalitarian systems.

Iber deftly explains the dynamics, dilemmas, and ultimate stalemate of Latin America's cultural cold war. The Soviet Union found the WPC a useful means to portray the United States as a threat to world peace—especially in Europe. Meanwhile, famous Latin American WPC affiliates such as Jorge Amado, Pablo Neruda, and Diego Rivera labored to sound the alarm against US imperialism while simultaneously avoiding a similar treatment of the Soviet parallels. The CIA-funded CCF countered the Soviets' European thrust by serving as a type of "Democratic Information Bureau" (85) to blunt Soviet propaganda. Largely through the efforts of Julián Gorkin, the CCF expanded into Latin America, where its regional adherents championed artistic and cultural freedom, crusaded against totalitarianism and dictatorship, and tried to expose the communist puppet masters behind WPC conferences, operations, and publications. However, the CCF's US sponsors and its Latin American affiliates were not always on the same page. The former prioritized defeating any communist advance in Latin America over promoting democracy in the region, while the latter saw ending (often US-supported) dictatorships and establishing democracy as at least equally important.

Yet the CCF, WPC, and their war of ideas did not dominate Latin America's cultural cold war for long. In 1959, postrevolutionary Cuba established Casa de las Americas to showcase its own artists and intellectuals and to enhance its ideological influence. In time, both Casa de las Americas and the journal it published bearing the same name "would come to be seen, as the World Peace Council had once been, as the chief rival to the CCF in Latin America" (132). By promoting a fiery revolutionary nationalism independent of either US or Soviet interests, Cuba's entry into the cultural cold war would further splinter Latin America's Left—separating those who condoned Cuba's brand of the just society from those who did not.

Ultimately, no side in the cultural cold war could claim a lasting victory. The CCF's signature triumph morphed into a defeat. Its Cuban affiliates helped legitimize Castro's insurgency against Fulgencio Batista and celebrated the dictator's overthrow; yet Castro's alignment with the USSR and communization of Cuba turned this CCF victory on its head. Moreover, having worked mightily to unmask the World Peace Council as a communist mouthpiece, in 1966 the CCF itself was exposed as a CIA front organization. The World Peace Council's record of achievements was no better. Although many of its regional affiliates would stay with the cause, as early as 1950 Pablo Neruda conceded that, for all intents and purposes, the WPC's general "campaign in Latin America had been a complete failure" (76). Cuba's revolution, meanwhile, helped resurrect and intensify leftist critiques of Mexico's lethargic "institutionalized revolution"—manifest, for example, in the National Liberation Movement (MLN) nominally led by Castro supporter and former president Lázaro Cárdenas. But in the end, Mexican leftists wound up lauding a Cuban regime that was more authoritarian than Mexico's, and the MLN was stifled by the Mexican state that Cárdenas himself had helped create.

Neither Peace nor Freedom is a solid, enlightening work of scholarship. It offers something to historians, Cold War students, and humanities scholars alike. One comes away from reading it with a deeper understanding of Latin America's intellectual history during this period and the constraints the Cold War placed on intellectuals whose clashing visions of achieving social justice through leftist politics remained at odds.

Bilateral Cold War Relations

The final pair of books under review analyze relations between the United States and two Latin American countries that became Cold War theaters: Cuba and Chile. The first of these is William LeoGrande and Peter Kornbluh's extraordinarily timely book *Back Channel to Cuba: The Hidden History of Negotiations between Washington and Havana*. While the history of US–Cuba estrangement and hostility is well known, the history that LeoGrande and Kornbluh chronicle is not. Despite the rupture in diplomatic relations and more than five decades of mutual hostility, both countries maintained an ongoing dialogue that tried to achieve mutual accommodation—and at times, even normal relations—through third-country mediation, unofficial diplomatic channels, and occasionally official ones. The dramatic December 2014 announcement by presidents Barack Obama and Raúl Castro that the United States and Cuba had finally agreed to normalize relations reflected a breakthrough that prior efforts had failed to achieve; and this event nearly coincided with the book's publication.

Structured chronologically from the Eisenhower through the Obama administrations, the history LeoGrande and Kornbluh present makes compelling reading. From the beginning of postrevolutionary Cuba, both countries' leaders searched for ways to avoid a severing of relations, and when this failed, to repair the breach. That these initiatives failed to bear fruit was not for lack of effort. A number of unofficial emissaries served as informal conduits between the two governments, including journalists like Lisa Anderson and Jean Daniel, author Gabriel García Márquez, Mexican presidents José López Portillo and Carlos Salinas de Gortari, Cuban American banker Bernardo Benes, Democratic Party operative Frank Mankiewicz, attorney James Donovan, and documentary filmmaker Saul Landau. Both governments also utilized third-country governments to communicate—Brazil, Britain, Mexico, Spain, and Switzerland—or were receptive to efforts these governments themselves made to foster dialogue.

Their failure to reach accommodation owed to several factors. One was each state's nonnegotiable but unacceptable demands. Cuba's insistence that the United States lift its economic embargo before negotiations on normalizing relations could begin was a nonstarter in Washington; in Havana the same was true for US insistence that Cuba abandon its sovereign right to pursue its own foreign policy (i.e., relations with the Soviets and support for 'anti-imperialist' struggles abroad). Another factor was unforeseen events: Castro and JFK's efforts to reach accommodation died with the US president in 1963. Domestic political factors also impeded rapprochement, whether it was the enhanced domestic legitimacy and political utility Castro found in vilifying the United States, or the US election cycle, the Cuban American lobby, or Cuban exiles' periodic and inopportune actions against the Castro government. Infighting within the US bureaucracy undercut

some efforts to reach more cordial relations, and perhaps most important was the intense mistrust each government harbored toward the other. These sentiments led both countries' leadership to misinterpret the other's motives, sometimes ignore their overtures, and magnify perceived slights and provocations. In the end, both the Cuban and US leadership contributed directly to the breakdown in relations and failure to achieve rapprochement through arrogance, pride, and missteps.

Back Channel to Cuba masterfully tells the hidden history of US–Cuban diplomacy. Some of its more interesting findings include President Kennedy's 1963 decision to overrule the State Department's insistence that Cuba break ties with the Sino-Soviet bloc before negotiations on mutual accommodation could begin, and his instructions to "start thinking along more flexible lines" (64); Henry Kissinger's plans to "smash" Cuba if Havana's military ventures in Angola spread to Namibia or Rhodesia (148); and President Gerald Ford's concurrence that a military strike would be needed sometime after the 1976 elections (which Ford lost). Readers will also learn that even the Reagan administration (a staunch Cuba foe) still held secret talks with Havana to facilitate bilateral cooperation on policy issues like Central America, immigration, and wars of liberation in Africa, and that in signing the 1996 Helms-Burton Act mainly for domestic political purposes, President Bill Clinton shifted control over the US economic embargo to Congress, which sharply restricted his successors' ability to normalize US–Cuban relations completely via unilateral executive authority. Perhaps most surprising is the number of times the Castro government sought dialogue and expressed interest in discussing "everything" relevant to US–Cuban relations. Among the book's less surprising findings are that Democratic administrations typically displayed greater interest in repairing bilateral relations than Republican ones, and that the George W. Bush administration displayed the least interest of all.

Given the lack of formal relations since 1961, this book's authors produce a remarkable diplomatic history by exploiting a trove of declassified US documents, a much smaller sampling of documents from Cuba and its former eastern bloc allies, public statements, and interviews with a large number of key players from the United States and Cuba. These include interviews with former presidents Jimmy Carter and Fidel Castro, and with intermediaries who ferried messages between Havana and Washington.

Although LeoGrande and Kornbluh strive to tell "both sides" of this hidden history, their analysis of the US dimension is deeper simply because of Cuba's unwillingness to declassify more internal documents. Still, the results are impressive. Over ten years in the making, *Back Channel to Cuba* is an insightful, well-argued, and well-documented work of scholarship. It is thoroughly researched and entertainingly written, provides a real service to scholars of diplomatic history and US–Cuban relations, and will likely stand as the best history of this troubled relationship for some time.

What LeoGrande and Kornbluh do for the hidden history of US–Cuban relations, Morris Morley and Chris McGillion do for US-Chilean relations in their book *Reagan and Pinochet: The Struggle over U.S. Policy toward Chile*. As a Cold War theater with deep US involvement, no South American country ranks close to Chile. Washington actively worked to destabilize the socialist government of Salvador Allende, celebrated the 1973 coup that deposed him, and then supported the anticommunist dictatorship that replaced Chile's democracy. The central question Morley and McGillion address is why, under President Ronald Reagan, US policy toward Chile shifted from a "close embrace" of the Augusto Pinochet regime "to a more complex approach" that sought Chile's transition back to democracy (24).

The answer they develop traces the evolution of US policy chronologically and takes readers deep into the debates and personalities inside the US government, the interactions between Chilean and US officials, and Chile's evolving political landscape. Fresh from victory over President Jimmy Carter, Reagan staffed much of his foreign policy team with strong anticommunists and ideological hardliners for whom Carter's focus on human rights took a back seat to fighting communism. Both Secretary of State Alexander Haig and UN Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick saw value in supporting Pinochet and little downside in allying with a repressive dictatorship that had adopted a free-market economic model and served US Cold War interests. Some policy officials did not share this view; nor did powerful lawmakers in Congress.

The result was disagreement between the executive and Congress, and at times within the executive branch itself. Absent clear improvement in human rights violations or cooperation in bringing to justice those responsible for assassinating Pinochet's enemies on US soil (the Orlando Letelier affair), Congress balked at renewing military aid to, or facilitating loans for, Chile through multilateral financial institutions. To appease congressional concerns and reestablish fully normalized relations, the Reagan administration tried to coax Pinochet into making modest reforms but was consistently rebuffed. In March 1982, Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Enders flew to Chile "to see if there was any possibility of getting the regime to be a little light on the human rights abuses." He told Pinochet that "no movement [on aid] was possible"

without Chile doing more “to prosecute those implicated in the Letelier case” (41). However, he returned to Washington having made no progress on either front.

By 1983, Pinochet’s continued repression, coupled with Chile’s own economic recession, debt crisis, and IMF-required austerity measures, sparked calls for his resignation and had catalyzed growing opposition to the government—from leftists and communists but also from significant numbers of middle-class and some upper-class Chileans. Monthly “days of protest,” an uptick in urban guerrilla movement activities, and other displays of civil disobedience followed. As polarization grew, so did US concerns that “the moderate political opposition would lose control of the protest movement to the left social movements and political parties” (54), yielding a powerful, multiclass opposition and greater potential for political destabilization. Pinochet’s fierce crackdown on protesters and public announcement that “he had no intention of relinquishing power” before the elections scheduled for 1989 forced some in Washington to reassess US policy toward Chile. For the State Department especially, merely encouraging modest reforms gave way to seeking a transition back to democracy.

Haig’s replacement at the State Department by George Shultz in 1982 had already diluted the influence of Reagan’s pro-Pinochet camp, and the president’s 1982 speech to Britain’s Parliament (outlining his global democracy promotion agenda) provided Shultz room to recast policy. More sensitive to Chile’s human rights problem than his predecessor and more of a pragmatist than ideologue, Shultz and others gradually added periodic public criticism of Chile’s human rights record to their quiet diplomatic efforts, but to no avail. By resisting any talk of a transition and electing to ride out the wave of mobilized opposition until it crested, Pinochet led US Embassy personnel to conclude he was “determined to stay in office beyond 1989” (164). Consequently, he increasingly became a problem Washington struggled to manage rather than an ally to be supported, and by 1987 Elliott Abrams, Assistant Secretary of State for Hemispheric Affairs, was left fretting about “how to use our limited influence effectively” to secure political change (232). Ultimately, Chile transitioned to democracy due primarily to internal dynamics, not US pressure.

In reconstructing this history of bilateral relations, Morley and McGillion appear to have sifted through every piece of data available. They draw skillfully on a wealth of documents and elite interviews—of both Reagan officials and leaders of Chile’s military regime and opposition—to illustrate the messy process by which US foreign policy was actually made. Beyond this, *Reagan and Pinochet* makes other substantial contributions. It demonstrates that democracy promotion was never the bedrock of US policy toward Chile as some Reagan admirers might believe. “At no time,” they write, “did Reagan administration policy reflect a sustained and principled commitment to democracy promotion in Chile”; instead, promoting democracy was “based on calculations that bilateral and regional U.S. interests would best be served by a political transition” (317). It also dispels two interrelated misperceptions: first, that a hegemonic United States could easily call the shots and influence its weaker neighbor’s behavior (the book aptly illustrates how frustrated US officials became with Pinochet’s intransigence and their lack of leverage to affect change); and second, that Chile’s transition exemplified an episode of US democracy promotion par excellence.

Reagan and Pinochet provides a thorough reference for anyone interested in US-Chilean relations under Reagan, even though both its title and cover (side-by-side photographs of Reagan and Pinochet) are somewhat misleading. While Pinochet largely controlled Chile’s domestic and foreign policies, the picture of Reagan that comes through is of a president almost completely disengaged from the specifics of US policy toward Chile, and even unfamiliar with its political history, for example, the identity of its former president Eduardo Frei (37). To the extent the president “mattered” to America’s Chile policy, it was in the specific individuals he chose to fill policy positions, his speech on democracy to the British Parliament, and the degree to which the officials he appointed could catch the president’s ear and influence his policy decisions.

Finally, although coauthored by a political scientist (Morley), *Reagan and Pinochet* is more diplomatic history than a work of political science. Its focus is on the process of policy making and the interactions between US and Chilean officials, not on erecting a theory-driven causal argument or devising a framework by which one might test competing causal claims about policy outcomes. Nevertheless, as a solid work of scholarship it meaningfully deepens our understanding of the complex relations between Washington and Santiago during the Cold War, and reminds us that even the influence of hegemonic powers can have limits.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that Latin America was a peripheral Cold War theater, the books reviewed here illustrate the value of studying that conflict’s Latin American context. Individually, they treat aspects of the region’s Cold War whose significance has rarely been explored or examined so deeply: the dynamics of the cultural cold war and the constraints it imposed on the intellectual communities that helped wage it; the agency

Latin American countries retained to craft their own policies, even under the shadow of the hegemonic United States; that hegemon's own limited influence to achieve preferred outcomes in spite of its enormous power; and the reasons why some governments could overcome their differences during the Cold War while for others rapprochement proved elusive.

Collectively, these works extend and help perfect our knowledge about Latin America's Cold War experience. Several also lend credence to Tanya Harmer's concept of an "Inter-American Cold War" that was distinct from the global contest between Moscow and Washington—a struggle to shape Latin America's future that pitted various regional governments and the United States against forces for change they deemed unacceptable.³ One finds clear echoes of this sentiment in the books by Iber and Keller, and to some extent in the work of Morley and McGillion, too. No doubt there is considerably more to be learned about this regional Cold War. With the passage of time, our distance from the actual conflict and the ongoing declassification of documents in the United States and beyond will invite scholars to extend the boundaries of knowledge even further.

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³ Tanya Harmer, *Allende's Chile and the Inter-American Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

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