CHAPTER I

PERCEIVING HEMISPHERIC INTERESTS AND COMMUNISM:
THE EXPERIENCE OF THE UNITED STATES

Geopolitical as well as ideological considerations play a pivotal role in
determining the foreign policy of any country. United States’ geo-strategic interests
have occupied a dominant role in shaping its policy towards other countries and regions
particularly the western hemisphere. From the nineteenth century onwards the United
States has adopted geopolitical parameters in formulating its interests in the region.
In the twentieth century, with the advent of communism as a dominant and rival ideology
and its internationalization especially after the Second World War again, it has been an
important consideration in the foreign policy of the United States. Moreover, the
influence of communism in the western hemisphere has been an issue of great concern
for the United States. These two themes, namely of geopolitical considerations and
anti-communism, which are of vital importance while discussing United States policy
towards the western hemisphere as well as towards individual countries in the region,
and which are central to this thesis, are being examined here.

Over the past few centuries, leaders of the United States and its supporters
have constantly asserted that values like liberty, equality and democracy form the basis
of both the United States political system and the conduct of relations with other
countries. In emphasizing these values, they quote from the Declaration of Independence
and the Bill of Rights to Washington’s Farewell Address of 1796 and beyond. The
Farewell Address is probably best known for its unambiguous advice on U.S. relations
with foreign powers, emphasizing the importance of neutrality and warning against “permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world.”¹ The consequence of this warning was the policy of isolationism – the belief that the best policy of the United States was to avoid getting involved in world affairs. However, within a few decades, particularly with the Monroe Doctrine, this attitude acquired some change with regard to its perception of the western hemisphere. In other words what developed as a consequence was “Continental Americanism.” It implied a concentration of interests on the continental domain and on building in the western hemisphere, a civilization in many respects peculiar to American life and the potentials of the American heritage. In concrete terms it meant non-intervention in the controversies and wars of Europe and Asia and resistance to the intrusion of European or Asiatic powers, systems, and imperial ambitions into the western hemisphere.² Again, despite Washington’s warning, the debate on the nature of a proper American approach to foreign policy did not end. The sense of mission was deeply entrenched, and at the outbreak of the Latin American revolution in 1815, Henry Clay urged the immediate recognition of the new republics “to further the influence of the New World.”³

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were an era of almost continual warfare among European empires and their colonies, and American leaders had no desire to

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see their country’s resources squandered in such struggles. A whole empire to the west of the original states awaited conquest, and Americans turned their backs on Europe and the rest of the world until their own empire stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Simultaneously they turned their attention to the south where a large territory and populace, newly independent, but economically and socially seeking a new status awaited. The United States accepted international responsibilities with self-doubt and reluctance when events of the twentieth century thrust themselves upon her. It briefly intervened in global affairs during the First World War, which was regarded as a shift from isolationism to internationalism, only to recede into its old cocoon. It would be only at the end of the Second World War that the United States finally bid farewell to isolationism.

Thomas A. Bailey states that the United States has always had fundamental foreign policies or objectives, “whether farsighted or shortsighted, successful or unsuccessful.” Six of these are isolation, freedom of the seas, the Monroe Doctrine, Pan-Americanism, the Open Door and the peaceful settlement of disputes. To these he adds secondary or tertiary policies that have existed for shorter periods to cope with specific situations. These would include disarmament, imperialism, non-recognition, commercial reciprocity, expatriation, Dollar diplomacy, Good Neighbourism and containment. He reiterates that some of these secondary policies are becoming or have become fundamental policies.4 However, both Bailey and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. deny that United States has anything like “ideology” in foreign policy.5

Dumbrell states that by treating ideology as un-American, defenders of US foreign policy have been able to characterise opposing ideologies as “‘ideological, over-zealous, dogmatic, undemocratic, totalitarian.’” 6 If at all one has to sum up the ideology of the United States in a phrase, the most appropriate would be “democratic liberalism” or “liberal democratic capitalism.” Democratic liberalism of the American kind can be traced to John Locke who is considered the ideological godfather of the American Revolution. Individual liberty, protection of private property, limited government, the rule of law and natural rights are some of the main features of Locke’s thought, and which Americans are prepared to accept as the intrinsic values dear to them.

**United States Geopolitical Strategies and Hemispheric Interests**

The United States did not begin its national existence as a great power. On the contrary, it was initially a relatively weak and remote state with a singular vital interest of safeguarding its newly gained independence. However, with the passing of time, the United States improved its relative and absolute position in the world and expanded the geographical reach of its “vital interests”. American foreign policy has always exhibited ambivalent attitudes towards geopolitical forms of order. Geopolitics is concerned with the conditions of “order” in a world of sovereign states.7 In Western juridical thought; order in international relations is associated with the basic doctrines of international law. These doctrines embody in legal language the fundamental concepts that underline the modern state system namely territorial sovereignty, the state as the sole subject of the system, the equality of states, non-intervention, and the right of

6. ibid.

7. Order refers here to stable arrangements of power. An arrangement is stable if it can be maintained without large-scale violence. However, order is a matter of degree, being more or less, rather than of kind.
states to act in self defence. However, although these legal notions are universally affirmed, in reality they are not the principal sources of order in the world. International order has been largely created and sustained by the role that great powers have played outside their territories. Thus, the geopolitical perspective emphasizes inequalities among states, zones of domination, patterns of intervention and penetration, alliances, conflict formations, and the role of military force. The United States initiated its existence through victory in a war of national liberation waged against one of the great powers of the time, Great Britain. The initial prime motive of its foreign policy was to avoid getting drawn into the geopolitical maelstrom of its era. The early years of the nineteenth century demonstrated that the United States depended for commercial reasons on interaction with Europe and would not, in turn, be left altogether alone to pursue its independent path.

Thomas Jefferson, despite his passion for decentralization and small-scale governance, was the chief architect of America’s continental expansion through huge territorial acquisitions conducted during his presidency, like the Louisiana Purchase. But more than this, the United States moved toward the proclamation of a custodial role for the entire western hemisphere. On one level, such a proclamation, formalized in the Monroe Doctrine in 1823⁸ extended the benefits of detachment to Latin America, the United States playing the self-appointed role of keeping the hemisphere off limits for the great powers of Europe. When asked by President James Monroe to comment on the proposed doctrine, Jefferson called it “the most momentous which has ever

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⁸ The Monroe Doctrine stated in effect that any attempt by European powers to interfere with their old colonies in the western hemisphere would not be tolerated by the United States and that the Americans were henceforth not to be considered as subjects for further colonisation by any European power.
been offered to my contemplation since that of Independence.” Jefferson believed that the Americas had a set of interests different from that of Europe which was a “domicile of despotism.” In essence he was reaffirming the notion of detachment from European affairs, the peculiar geopolitical orientation of the United States and America’s moral superiority as important elements of United States foreign policy.

It was not long before that the attempt to contain European colonial expansion blended into the development of a distinctive anti-colonial American brand of expansionism. As Samuel P. Huntington suggests, the anti-colonial ideology of the United States has not extinguished the imperial impulse, but merely channelled that impulse into economic and cultural forms of penetration rather than territorial or juridical forms of transnational penetration and control, ranging from notions of custodial intervention in Latin America to the maintenance of an “open door policy” to assure economic access in the Far East. Indeed, this dual geopolitical heritage underlies all subsequent efforts by the United States to spread its influence, while simultaneously adding to its affluence by reconciling its immense power and wealth with an abiding special sense of national virtue, a self-proclaimed “exceptionalism”.

Geographic proximity has always been crucial in determining United States policy towards the western hemisphere. The United States has been a major historical influence on the political and economic developments in the western hemisphere.


The beginning of U.S. interest in the western hemisphere is typically marked by the announcement of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823. This statement identified the United States with the independence of the Latin American states and provided a basis for excluding European colonialism from the western hemisphere. Almost a century later, the Spanish-American War of 1898 brought the United States into an active role in the region and launched it into a period of intervention in the Caribbean and the Central American region. President Theodore Roosevelt’s 1904 “Corollary”\textsuperscript{11} to the Monroe Doctrine sanctioned U.S. intervention in order to prevent European intervention in the region.

Historically, the United States has approached hemispheric issues and relations in Latin America to ensure military, security and economic advantage and domination. The Monroe Doctrine was as much an instrument of economic hegemony as it was an expression of U.S. political influence and self interested paternalism. This combination of forces successfully drove United States policies over the years, enabling and encouraging U.S. business to develop its investment, mining and marketing interests throughout Latin America in conditions of absolute commercial advantage. In the early twentieth century, the United States intervened politically, diplomatically and militarily to consolidate its hegemonic role in the region and to pursue certain specific goals. It was to establish and maintain the U.S. monopoly of the trans-isthmian canal in Panama, contain European and other geopolitical and economic incursions into the isthmus, promote U.S. investment and trade, contain leftist regimes and movements, and

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\item [\textsuperscript{11}] The Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine asserted that the United States had the power and right to control any interference in the affairs of the hemisphere by outside governments and to ensure that acceptable governments were maintained there.
\end{itemize}
promote political stability and constitutional rule. In general, U.S. interests in the western hemisphere derived from the geographical proximity of the region and the notion of U.S. national security including the presence of strategic resources and high level of trade and investment.

There are obvious U.S. security interests arising out of the region’s nearness. These are usually defined as keeping the hemisphere free from the influence of hostile powers. In fact, this particular interest has influenced U.S. policy since the early days of the nineteenth century. It is generally assumed that no coalition of Latin American states would be a security threat to the United States without outside help. From the beginning, the United States had spoken of Latin America and the Caribbean as a single region. James Monroe’s message to Congress in 1823, warning Europe against interference, referred to all of “our Southern brethren” in the “American continents”.\(^\text{12}\) In 1889, the invitation to an Inter-American Conference in Washington was extended to all states of the region. The same spirit was evident with regard to the Rio Pact, the Organisation of American States and the Alliance for Progress. Thus U.S. policymakers have for long considered excluding competing and especially hostile extra hemispheric influences from Latin America and the Caribbean. From World War II through the 1980s, a major goal of successive U.S. administrations was to assure continued U.S. dominance in the Western Hemisphere and the Caribbean Basin.\(^\text{13}\)


Political interests of the United States with regard to the western hemisphere include a preference for supporting governments sympathetic to the United States and its global role. The intrusion of “non–American” threats, including hostile ideologies, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries resulted in the invocation of the Monroe Doctrine, both explicitly and implicitly. Again, a fundamental concern of U.S. policymakers’ political interest is to guard against instability in the region. Instability of any kind is seen as “bad” for the United States. Stability, on the other hand, is desirable because it is presumed to be necessary for security, for reliable economic relations, and for predictable diplomacy. Thus, the constant seeking of stability for its own sake may be the common denominator in understanding the definition of U.S. interests in Latin America. A less tangible political interest is how U.S–Latin American relations reflect upon the worldwide reputation of the United States. The perception that the United States honours its commitments and stands by its friends is important to U.S. policymakers. Thus events in the region may become important not because of their threat to the U.S. position in Latin America but because of this perceived impact on U.S. credibility in global politics.

The economic interests of the United States in Latin America are of great significance. Economic interests include continued access to about thirty strategically important raw materials and minerals including manganese, bauxite and petroleum. About 16 percent of U.S. imports of manganese come from two Latin American countries, Brazil (10 percent) and Mexico (6 percent). Bauxite is also one of the essential strategic raw materials imported primarily from Latin America. A major import from Latin America is petroleum. In 1985, more than one third of U.S. imports of crude petroleum came from Latin America. Nearly all of this was produced in two
countries; Mexico and Venezuela. Natural gas is also imported from Mexico. From the perspective of U.S. security interests, the strategic position of Mexico is particularly important, for it is the only Latin American country with which the United States shares a land border. Economic interests in the region also involve the activity of U.S. investors and exporters, essentially private interests. The U.S. government takes the position that it is in the national interest to promote the health of private commerce, a sector of vital concern.

Strategically also, the western hemisphere is important to the United States. Many islands in the Caribbean and the Central American states are in a geographical sense close to the mainland of the United States. The Panama Canal serves as the ocean link between its Atlantic and Pacific coasts. Commercial shipping relies much on the Panama Canal. Moreover, global military obligations can be fulfilled by the ability to move naval forces through the Canal. The islands in the Caribbean are also vital as bases for the United States. Consequently, it is important that no foreign power establish such bases in the region. A specific objective during the cold war was to prevent the Soviet capability to launch strategic weapons against the United States from such bases.

Thus the most important goals of the United States in the hemisphere are to maintain a region of independent states friendly to the United States, economically linked and dependent to it, and also strategically and militarily subservient to it.

The “western hemisphere idea” has served to justify U.S. policy in Latin America.

It is an endeavour consistent with co-operation and community but it has also contributed to popular illusions in the United States about shared interests and Latin support for the U.S. view of the world. But some analysts explain U.S. policy using a different concept, namely, “sphere of influence”. Traditionally, areas adjacent to major powers have been characterized as zones or spheres of influence, and Latin America may well fit this description because of its sharing of the western hemisphere with the United States. A standard definition is that a sphere of influence is an area “in which one Great Power assumes exclusive responsibility for maintenance of peace... it denotes a situation in which one power has acquired a monopoly or near monopoly for its services to that area.”16 A sphere of influence is a region in which a major power has hegemony or pre-eminence, and from which other major powers are excluded. A common form of control in a sphere is a major power intervention, especially when a small county shows signs of independence and of developing ties with another major power.17

The concept of sphere of influence is most often associated with the “realist” approach to international relations. This approach contends that all nations pursue power and that relations between nations are based almost entirely on power considerations. Since the pursuit of power is always in the national interest, states constantly seek to promote and protect their strength and influence. Thus, U.S. realists would evaluate events in Latin America only in terms of how they affect the United States, not in terms of how they affect the Latin Americans. What counts in U.S. policy, therefore,

is how developments in Latin America contribute to or erode the political, military and economic interest of the United States. In a geopolitical sense Latin America is, as every president since James Monroe has repeatedly remarked “our backyard”. Thus, the geopolitical environment of the Western Hemisphere over the last two centuries has been conditioned to a large extent by the emergence of the United States as the unquestionably dominant power in the extensive region.

Communism: The Perception of the United States

It is difficult to specify what the ideology of the United States is in the same sense that we refer to other political ideologies and isms. Within communism, “ideology” includes forms of thought which recognise the existence of class interests and struggle and the advocacy of common ownership. There is no American ideology in that sense. Some would consider “liberal capitalist democracy” to be the ideology of the United States. The realisation of the existence of an American ideology may have occurred and become more pronounced particularly in the twentieth century with the rise of communism in the Soviet Union and fascism in Europe. Since on its part the United States did not recognise an ideology for itself, the realisation of and acceptance of one was rather reactive. Paradoxically, in a narrow sense the American ideology tended to be called anticommunism. This in itself to a great extent defined the American ideology. Ideology becomes relevant in the discussion of foreign policy also. Michael Hunt states that ideology is an invaluable tool in the study of diplomatic history. Established ideologies undergo challenges and new ones arise, as the Cold War and the American experience in Vietnam have shown.\textsuperscript{18} In 1917, the Bolshevik

Revolution added for the United States a layer of deep ideological incompatibility. President Woodrow Wilson’s reaction to the Bolsheviks was predictable when he proclaimed in July 1919 that, “the men who… control… the affairs of Russia represent nobody but themselves…. They have no mandate from anybody…. A group of men more cruel than the Czar himself is controlling the destinies of that great people.”\textsuperscript{19}

The most fundamental source of Wilson’s antipathy, however, was the communist vision of humanity’s political, economic and social order that emerged from the revolution of 1917. Wilson therefore sought to interpose American military and economic power against the communists. Although Wilson reached at his decision to intervene in the Soviet Union because of his wide image of American interests, he had support from large sections of public opinion. The Bolsheviks were considered as a usurping gang of lunatics, anarchists and Jews. Because they were considered illegitimate in every sense by Americans, general predations were that they would not last. Throughout the 1920s, Soviet–American relations were frozen by an American policy of non-recognition of the communist regime. Wilson’s Secretary of State, Bainbridge Colby stated that the existing regime in Russia was based upon the negation of every principle of honour and good faith upon which it was possible to base relations. He was critical of the Soviet position that revolutions had to occur in all other great civilised nations. As a consequence the United States could not have official relations with a country whose conceptions of international relations were so entirely alien and so utterly repugnant. The United States even pressed for Soviet acknowledgement of Czarist debts. It was clear that the Soviet conception of world order and the internal regime of states were the dominant bones of contention.

\textsuperscript{19.} James A. Nathan and James K. Oliver, \textit{United States Foreign Policy and World Order} (Glenview, Ill: Scott, Foresman and Co, 1989) p. 12.
The outbreak of World War II in 1939 brought about the abandonment of American isolationism and consequently wartime co-operation with the Soviet Union. The two had already established diplomatic relations in 1933. When the Second World War destroyed the balance of power that had existed before 1939, it left a bipolar structure of world power centred on U.S-Soviet rivalry. For over four decades United States foreign policy had sought to build an international order based on American military and economic superiority. From the outset of the post war period, policy makers postulated a relationship between American national security and some form of world order. In late 1945, American policy makers faced the task of reconstructing a world order shattered by global war, economic dislocation, depression, and political and social revolution. The United States possessed seemingly limitless military power with its monopoly of atomic weapons. During this period the cause of liberal internationalism became inextricably bound up with the idea of containing an expansionist Soviet–directed communism.\textsuperscript{20} Containment of communism became the bedrock of U.S. foreign policy for the next forty years. The purpose of post war foreign policy had been to create an environment in which democratic capitalism could flourish in a world in which the United States still remained the dominant actor.

\textbf{The Containment of Communism}

Since the end of World War II, the foreign policy of the United States has been dedicated to the containment of communism. The United States pursued this policy because of the belief that communism was a threat to its peace and security. To most Americans, communism was viewed as a doctrinaire belief system diametrically opposed to the “American way of life.” The United States followed anticommunism

\textsuperscript{20} ibid. p. 13.
as a policy on the conviction that the Marxist–Leninist doctrine comprised of alien ideas that posed a threat to the United States and to the world at large. It was based on the assumption that communism was an expansionist and crusading force, intent on converting the entire world to its beliefs, and that, however evil, its doctrines might command widespread appeal. In addition, because communism was seen as inherently totalitarian, antidemocratic, and anti-capitalist, it was perceived as a real threat to freedom, liberty, and prosperity throughout the world. In a speech on 9 February 1946 Soviet President Joseph Stalin asserted that communism and capitalism were incompatible and that true peace was impossible until the former supplanted the latter. Most people in the United States received the speech as a warlike call to confrontation between communism and the West. Less than a month later, Winston Churchill, in his famous “Iron Curtain” speech at Fulton, Missouri, asserted that the Soviets did not want war but rather “the fruits of war and the indefinite expansion of their power and doctrines.”

George F. Kennan’s “long telegram” from Moscow in February 1946 (later the basis for his famous “Mr. X” article in 1947) rationalized the U.S. policy of containment. Kennan characterized the USSR as an expansionistic society driven by its revolutionary Marxist-Leninist ideology, its paranoid sense of national insecurity,

21. ibid., p. 16.
22. ibid., p. 4.
and its Stalinist totalitarianism. Throughout much of the post war era, official pronouncements about the United States global objectives stressed that communist doctrine represented a real menace to the United States. In his address to Congress on 12 March, 1947, President Harry S. Truman announced that the United States would support free people resisting subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressure and it became known as the “Truman Doctrine.” Truman’s pronouncement viewed international politics as a contest for world domination, with the Soviet Union as an imperial power bent on world conquest. An American policy was formulated around a commitment to engage fully in this contest to contain the Soviet Union’s global designs. The doctrine declared that whenever and wherever an anti-communist government was threatened, by indigenous insurgents, foreign invasion, or even diplomatic pressure, the United States would supply political, economic, and most of all, military aid. “The Truman Doctrine came close to shutting the door against any revolution, since the terms ‘free peoples’ and ‘anti-Communist’ were thought to be synonymous.”

The United States emerged from the Second World War undoubtedly as the most powerful economy on earth. However, the economic situation in Europe was a source of grave concern to President Truman and his Secretary of State George C. Marshall. In a major speech at a Harvard University on 5 June 1947, Marshall called for a determined United States effort (the Marshall Plan) to promote the economic


The Cold War arose from two seemingly incompatible conceptions of the ideal shape of the post war world order. Many western scholars blame the Soviet Union for initiating the path of confrontation. Scholars like Herbert Feis believe that even though Americans had hoped to return to peacetime conditions at the end of World War II, these expectations were soon ruined by Soviet behaviour. Containment divided the world but, ironically, facilitated the spread of American–style globalization. Once China became a Communist state, and particularly after the Korean War in 1950, the Truman administration abandoned its existing geopolitical priorities and moved towards an unrestricted global anti-communist crusade. Thus any advance of communism anywhere in the world was seen as a threat to the credibility of the United States’ anti-communist struggle.

The backdrop of the cold war was very apparent when Dwight Eisenhower delivered his first State of the Union Address to Congress on 2 February 1953. The President told his audience that, “our country has come through a painful period of

trial and disillusionment since the victory of 1945. While Americans desired a ‘world of peace and co-operation’ they faced ‘a world of turmoil’ due to the calculated pressures of aggressive communism”. The Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles had a different way of dealing with future communist aggression. His interpretation of the containment strategy was built around the three concepts namely rollback of communism, brinkmanship and massive retaliation.  

**Communism and the Western Hemisphere**

After 1945 there was an increase of U.S. support for liberal democratic regions, but that soon changed to the new geo-strategic imperative to contain communism and Soviet influence. The World War II era U.S-Latin American military and political co-operation schemes were updated into the new Inter-American security system under the Rio Pact and the Organisation of American States treaty in the late 1940s. Anti-communism had become a virtual obsession. The degree to which containment of communism would dominate U.S. relations in the western hemisphere was soon made clear by U.S. intervention in Guatemala in 1954 to topple the constitutional government under the pretext that it was communist influenced. Edelberto Torres-Rivas describes it as the defeat of a national-popular movement “at the hands of a military conspiracy representing an extremely conservative movement of landowners, inspired and directed by people from the United States.”


34. Charles W. Kegley, Jr. and Eugene R. Wittkopf, n.23, p.91.

In less than five years, the United States would face its first crisis in this regard in Cuba where a revolutionary movement led by Fidel Castro mobilized workers, peasants and other sectors and toppled the U.S. supported Batista government. Castro spoke of a social revolution and wanted to nationalize the sugar sector which formed the backbone of the economy. Castro’s ‘revolutionary’ approach sounded alarm bells in the United States. To compound this, Cuba established close relations with the Soviet Union. In February 1960, Cuba made a deal with the USSR to exchange Cuban sugar for Soviet petroleum, manufactured goods and technical assistance. In July the United States retaliated by radically cutting its sugar quota from Cuba. In January 1961, the Eisenhower administration broke diplomatic relations with the Castro’s regime. The new Kennedy administration addressed the Cuban-American impasse in two ways. It sought to nullify the spread of Castroism elsewhere in the hemisphere and to behead the movement at its source.36

The Cuban revolution was responsible for the further energizing of U.S. efforts to contain communism in the region. The defection of Cuba from the U.S. hegemonic system to the Soviet Union brought major U.S. efforts to solidify and consolidate its influence in the region. In the 1960s the United States sharply increased direct assistance to Central America which included the increase of regional military cooperation. Paradoxically, despite U.S. rhetoric about democracy, during the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations, four of the five Central American governments receiving U.S. aid were military dictatorships. The United States mobilized Central American cooperation in the abortive Bay of Pigs exile invasion of Cuba in 1961 and

in the 1965 U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic. Although U.S. military assistance to Central America shrank somewhat during the Nixon and Ford administration because of the war in Vietnam, economic assistance to the region grew in the early 1970s.

In 1961, to counter the Cuban threat and example, President John F. Kennedy launched the Alliance for Progress, an aid programme aimed at achieving by the end of the decade economic growth, more equitable distribution of national income, reduced unemployment, agrarian reforms, education, housing, and health in Latin America. Kennedy declared the transformation of “the American continents into a vast crucible of revolutionary ideas and efforts, an example to the world that liberty and progress walk hand in hand.” The Alliance for Progress was intended to be an alliance against Cuba and was underscored by the reality that the U.S. government informed all countries throughout the region that there would be no aid for any country that allowed its ships or aircraft to carry any equipment, materials or commodities to Cuba so long as it was governed by the Castro regime. Successive U.S. administrations had been united in the proclamation that there would be “no more Cubas” in Latin America. President Johnson declared that “the American nations cannot, must not, and will not permit the establishment of another Communist government in the Western Hemisphere.”

The effort of the United States was not entirely successful. By the end of the 1970s it was evident that the Alliance for Progress had not achieved its goals of political, economic or social transformation in the way the United States had intended. On the

38. ibid.
39. ibid., p.162.
other hand social and revolutionary mass movements began to take shape in the 1970s in the western hemisphere. They began in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala and exposed the deep cracks in the foundations of the then existing political regimes. In 1979 the social revolutionaries seized political power in Nicaragua. From 1980, El Salvador was in the throes of a civil war. Social revolutionary mass movements found a fertile ground because social dissatisfaction was widespread and intense among the masses. During this period, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras were marked by socioeconomic structural and procedural conditions that made possible the development of a powerful potential for social dissatisfaction. Land, income, wealth, educational opportunities, and chances for social advancement were unevenly distributed. For decades the governing regimes had pursued a policy of socioeconomic modernization according to the motto “growth without equality-oriented development.” This forced the lower classes to carry the burden of economic “progress”. Significant structural reforms with a redistributive character, such as agrarian reform, were never initiated. Almost all these factors made the region more receptive to leftist or communist ideologies.

When Richard Nixon became president in 1969, the edifice of post-war American foreign policy was badly shaken. While the war in Vietnam continued, Nixon worked on attaining détente with the Soviet Union. President Nixon and his National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger did not entirely depart from the global anti-communist policies of their predecessors, as their interventions in Chile against President Salvador Allende made it evident. In September 1970, Allende won a plurality

40. Heinrich-W. Krumwiede, “Regimes and Revolution in Central America,” in Wolf Grabendorff et al. (eds.) n. 35, p. 11.
of votes for the presidency of Chile. Nixon authorized the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to prevent Allende’s victory. He failed, and Allende was elected. The CIA’s next instructions were to subvert the Chilean economy. Within three years, owing to U.S. pressure and Allende’s inability to manage his heterogeneous leftist coalition, the country had polarized, and the military overthrew him. Thus the United States had contributed significantly to undermining a democracy in Latin America because the incumbent was a leftist.\footnote{Robert A. Pastor, n.\textit{12}, p.196.}

During the 1970s the international geopolitical environment and U.S. foreign policy underwent remarkable transformations. Although the United States remained the world’s strongest military power and its largest single economy, U.S. relative capacity and influence in the world community continued to decline. By the 1980s, U.S. influence within the western hemisphere had also eroded noticeably as other external and internal powers began asserting themselves and pursuing independent policies. External actors provided new sources of support that partially reduced regional dependency upon the United States. The United States continued to play the leading role in the area, but other nations and groups were also prominent.

The foreign policy outlook of President Jimmy Carter was profoundly shaped by the American experience in Vietnam. To de-emphasis the competition with the Soviet Union, Carter called on the American people to abandon their “inordinate fear of communism.”\footnote{President Jimmy Carter, Address at Notre Dame University, 22 May 1977, \textit{Public Papers of Presidents 1977}, (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1977).} To avoid another Vietnam, Carter proposed that the United States
combine support for its authoritarian allies with the effective promotion of human rights within the Third World countries. He hoped that by inducing dictators to change their repressive policies, the United States would not only be enhancing freedom and democracy but also would remove the cause of revolutionary violence in Third World countries. In contrast to Carter’s approach, President Ronald Reagan, an ardent opponent of communism and other leftist movements, saw the revolutionary and leftist trends in Third World as an extension of Soviet-Communist expansionism.

United States policy towards the western hemisphere has thus been formulated on geopolitical considerations which have taken into account the issues of geographical proximity, economic interests and strategic factors. In the twentieth century, the threat of communism and leftist regimes in the western hemisphere added an extra dimension to United States foreign policy and its relations with the region. Consequently, the entire cold war period saw the vigorous pursuance on the part of the United States of a policy based on preserving its political, economic, strategic and ideological supremacy in the western hemisphere.