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Tanya Harmer has written an excellent and important article on the central question of the Cuban Revolution's impact on Latin America in the early years of the island's political transformation that provoked such a profound increase in Cold War tensions within the hemisphere. Her interpretation moves beyond the traditional framing of this conflict as one solely between the United States and Havana, with other Latin American states largely watching from the sidelines, their reactions motivated principally by Washington's directives and agenda. As such, her work restores agency to the other important players in the region: the numerous Latin American republics and their perspectives on the crisis – and decenters this standoff as a 'High Noon' showdown between a lone hegemon confronting its former client state.¹ The other main historiographic take on this topic has comprised a broad left-leaning critique of Washington's unremitting and counterproductive hostility against Cuba's legitimate quest for sovereignty. For decades both Latin American and U.S. scholars have espoused this view, which mirrors that of Cuban authors on the subject, and lacks only their sharper Marxist and anti-imperialist language.² Harmer explores a third path apart from these dominant trends, one that views the inter-American response to Communist revolution as central to understanding the conflict's impact on the region.

Harmer's approach fits in with more recent edited volumes on the "long Cold War" in Latin America, such as *In from the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War* (2008) and *A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence during Latin America's Long Cold War* (2010).³ Both of these and other recent monographs view the Cold War in Latin America as a distinctly regional struggle dating back to the Bolshevik Revolution's triumph in Russia and its influence on the Americas and even earlier anarchist and socialist movements south of the Rio Grande. Such works

¹ Cole Blasier, *The Hovering Giant: United States Response to Revolutionary Change in Latin America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976); Richard E. Welch Jr, *Response to Revolution: The United States and the Cuban Revolution, 1959–1961* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985); Thomas G. Paterson, *Contesting Castro: The United States and the Triumph of the Cuban Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Louis A. Pérez, *Cuba and the United States: Ties of Singular Intimacy* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003); Lars Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic: The United States and the Cuban Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

² Lisandro Otero, Edmundo Desnoes, et al. *Playa Girón: Derroto del imperialismo*. Havana, Cuba: Ediciones R, 1962); Carlos Tablada, *El pensamiento económico de Ernesto Ché Guevara* (Havana: Casa de las Americas, 1987); Rigoberto Cruz Díaz, *Guantánamo Bay* (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 1977; Luis Alfonso Zayas, *Soldado en la Revolución Cubana* (Havana: Instituto de Historia de Cuba, 2008); Juan Carlos Rodríguez Cruz, *Girón: La Batalla Inevitable* (Havana: Editorial Capitan San Luis, 2009).

³ Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniela Spenser, eds., *In from the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008) and Gilbert M. Joseph and Greg Grandin, eds., *A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence during Latin America's Long Cold War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

emphasize Latin America's strong domestic tradition of anti-Communism that predated and was often separate from the U.S. championing of the movement after 1947. Conservative ideology, the power of the Catholic Church, rightist militaries, landed oligarchies, and a small but growing middle class within the region provided strong local opposition to Communist revolution apart from Washington's geostrategic concerns. These powerful local actors saw Communism as a profound threat to their long-held dominance, status, and aspirations.

Skillfully using multi-archival Latin American sources, Harmer delineates the various positions and groupings that formed among American states regarding Cuba's overthrow of the pro-American Batista dictatorship and the rapid changes that followed. At first Fidel Castro's triumph was viewed enthusiastically by most nations, with the notable exception of several Caribbean and Central American dictatorships. But attitudes began to shift even among the so-called moderate states that retained elements of democracy within their politics when Cuba's revolution radicalized. Dramatic land reform, the nationalization of both foreign and domestic investments, drumhead executions of Fulgencio Batista's police and military members, as well the subordination of the church and the normal electoral process in Cuba alarmed the island's hemispheric neighbors. Cuba's new alignment with the Soviet Union proved especially shocking, perhaps even more so than in Washington, to Latin Americans (122-125). Still, Harmer notes that many key South American nations, such as Brazil, Argentina, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Chile moved slowly towards open opposition and especially the breaking of diplomatic ties and economic sanctions against Castro. Domestic concerns in these countries, which had strong leftist parties in upcoming elections and lots of admiration among local students and activists for the romantic and rebellious aspects of Castro's and Ché Guevara's revolution, initially constrained such states from taking too hard a line against Cuba. U.S. opposition to Cuba grew exponentially following Castro's alliance with the Soviet bloc in the spring of 1960, and Washington had little patience for such nuances that were crucial to many Latin American leaders who understood the political landscape of their own countries far better than U.S. policymakers (127-129).

Latin American officials also made the telling point that sanctions would be ineffective since Cuba's trade relations following the January 1961 U.S. embargo increasingly moved towards Moscow and the Eastern Bloc. Cuba's hemispheric neighbors also wisely noted that cutting off relations completely with Havana would end any chance to negotiate and perhaps ameliorate its increasingly strident policies. Such isolation would only harden the socialist nature of the revolution and increase Cuba's dependence on the Soviet Union (135). Larger nations like Brazil and especially Mexico had to take into account their citizens' national pride as regional powers and could not afford to be seen as kowtowing to Washington like 'poodle dogs' of the northern colossus. Mexico, though a fairly conservative nation by the 1960s, still clung to its earlier image as a revolutionary state and did have a more leftist orientation than the United States in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Turning against a Latin American sister state at the behest of the country that had conquered one half of Mexican national territory in the nineteenth century and intervened frequently on its soil and that of its Caribbean/Central American neighbors, was a pill too difficult to swallow for numerous Mexican authorities.

The failure of the U.S. to consult and coordinate its anti-Cuban strategies with its regional allies, as local critics noted, was also key to the alienation of several states on this issue. Planning for the 'Bay of Pigs' invasion, which was kept secret from many of Washington's friends, serves as an illustration (130-131). This fiasco emerged as the clear violation of the non-intervention principle central to the Rio Pact and the Organization of American States (OAS) charter. The defeated invasion provoked a surge of anti-U.S. and pro-Castro feeling throughout the hemisphere, undercutting Washington and that of her conservative allies' criticisms of the island's regime.

The increasing Soviet influence and presence on the island shifted the political terrain regarding Cuba considerably, as Harmer points out, and formerly hesitant leaders came to embrace, however reluctantly, a harder U.S. line against Castro's government. Castro's declaration that he was a Marxist-Leninist for life, combined with his open commitment to spreading socialist revolution throughout the Americas, proved a turning point for many leaders, who now saw themselves in the crosshairs of future Cuban insurgencies, several of which had already begun, though their connections to Havana were still unproven (126, 130, 133). A key juncture occurred at the January 1962 Punta del Este OAS Foreign Ministers meeting in Uruguay, where divergent views on how to deal with Castro's government remained, but Cuba's membership in the OAS was officially suspended despite five abstentions from important states and the feeling among them that Washington's obsession with Castro was distorting U.S. judgment and only strengthening Castro's obduracy (136).

The Cuban Missile Crisis in the fall of 1962, during which Latin American as well as U.S. territory for the first time came under threat of nuclear attack, marked a Rubicon for many regarding regional patience with the revolution. As Harmer shows, this crisis also highlighted an often-ignored component to the inter-American reaction to Cuba's revolution: the frustration of some Latin Americans with Washington's failure to counter the revolution effectively (138-39). More right-leaning and even centrist Latin American leaders expressed disgust with Washington's pusillanimity, though Cubans under siege from Operation Mongoose and the Bay of Pigs invasion naturally viewed U.S. responses differently. Washington appeared a helpless giant to more strident Latin American conservatives who could not understand why President John F. Kennedy did not use the crisis as justification for invasion and the overthrow of Castro (140-41). This view is telling, as it runs counter to stereotypical image of the United States as all-powerful colossus manipulating all players and events in the hemisphere.

By the end of 1962, Washington had clearly failed to defeat the revolution that singled it out as humanity's greatest villain. Kennedy even pledged as part of his missile negotiations never to invade Cuba, thereby removing a key option from his strategic toolbox, a move that stunned Latin American leaders who were facing Cuban-inspired insurgencies. By 1964, all Latin American nations, with the exception of Mexico, broke relations with Havana and practically all imposed trade sanctions. Washington had at last succeeded in getting nearly everyone in the Western Hemisphere on board in freezing out Cuba, though at considerable costs, and in the case of Haiti and a few other countries, outright bribes (i.e. the creative use of Alliance for Progress aid) (136, 144-149).

This article is a strong work that provides a deeper analysis by bringing more players into our calculation of the Western Hemisphere's reaction to the Cuban Revolution. It centralizes Latin America's position apart from the dominant U.S. narrative. Harmer elucidates the main issues in contention and the motivations behind the responses of various states that U.S. officials had trouble deciphering as they tended to view this standoff as just another chess move in their grand showdown with the Kremlin. Because of this, they missed key regional divergences and complications – the very essence of local rather than global diplomacy. There are a few areas of inquiry that Harmer might have explored in greater depth to strengthen her arguments, even if spatial limits in these essays obtain, and going off on fascinating sidetracks can sometimes blur one's focus. Still, the Bay of Pigs invasion could have been further explored, as well as its perception as a return to 'Big Stick' diplomacy, which truly upset Latin American leaders who found it difficult to defend such a blatant U.S. attempt to overthrow a hemispheric neighbor. Latin American as well as Cuban public opinion was fully aroused by this event, which had the effect of transforming Castro into a hero who had successfully defeated another gringo effort at regime change that was so despised by local citizens everywhere. Some inclusion of grassroots resistance to isolating Cuba might also be in order, as the article takes an understandable high-status diplomatic approach with few popular voices, letters-to-the-editor, worker denunciations, etc., in its analysis.

Finally, I wonder about possibly expanding the parameters of inquiry to some players outside of Latin America for greater context. Much recent scholarship has viewed the Cuban Revolution as part of the larger decolonization movement of the period. Cuba could apparently afford to alienate members of the hemispheric community as it sought new relationships with a global community of recently independent African and Asian states, besides its alliances with the Communist world.⁴ And how were Latin American dissenters similar in their objections to the U.S. demonization of Cuba, one wonders, to those in Canada, Great Britain, and European states who also hesitated to join the 'let's all close ranks against Cuba' crusade, mirroring in some ways their reaction to the U.S. effort to isolate Red China a decade earlier? These are just a few thoughts on how the article might be broadened and perhaps strengthened in its analysis. Of course, ventures in these areas would, as mentioned, also lengthen the essay and even confuse its focus. It is a testament to the strength of the article that it provoked such far-reaching reflections from this reviewer.

⁴ Jorge I. Domínguez, *To Make a World Safe for Revolution: Cuba's Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989); Jonathan C. Brown, *Cuba's Revolutionary World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017); David Luis-Brown, *Waves of Decolonization: Discourses of Race and Hemispheric Citizenship in Cuba, Mexico, and the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Thomas C. Fields Jr. et al (eds.) *Latin America and the Global Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020).

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