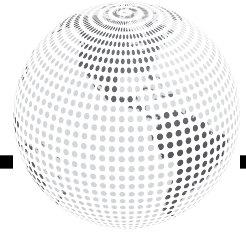


United States Policy and Latin America

an Interview with former Secretary General of the Organization of American States



Ambassador Luigi R. Einaudi

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Ambassador Einaudi spoke at Cornell at the invitation of the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Luigi Einaudi Chair in European and International Studies named after his grand-father. The Board of the Cornell International Affairs Review had the privilege of conducting an interview with him during his visit. The following article, produced here with his permission, is an edited transcript of this interview. The Board of the Cornell International Affairs Review thanks Ambassador Einaudi for his support.

The United States under the new administration has a chance to develop the good foreign policy towards Latin America it needs. But it first needs a good global foreign policy. The United States, after all, has a global reach and global involvements. Latin American countries do too, even if to a lesser extent. I recommend no special policy for Latin America. The United States needs a global policy, before defining regional policies. US global policy has been a failure in the last years. It has not supported international rule of law. It has not fostered cooperation on global issues beyond its immediate interests, and consequently, left itself unable to obtain the spontaneous cooperation of other countries. To have a good overall foreign policy the United States must begin by supporting international law through the existing institutions and body of laws such as the International Criminal Court, law of the sea treaty, active participation in environment and human rights. The unilateral intervention in Iraq, for instance, was chilling for Latin America, given the importance of international law in the region and the complete ill-regard of the United States in by-passing several conditions agreed to in international treaties. The single most important necessity for the United States is to restore a sense of US respect for international law, and accepting existing treaties. The United States needs to put an end to Guantanamo. Rule-based engagement would strengthen

the ability of the United States to get support for all its objectives.

What countries matter for United States foreign policy? They all matter. The problem with the Bush administration is that it did not listen. Other countries felt



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ignored and humiliated. To correct this, the next Administration will need to listen and to strengthen US representation in international organizations. This would increase its ability to participate in international dialogue. The United States needs a diplomatic surge. For that, it needs to improve the training of its people to be involved in foreign affairs. The United States should require its senior foreign service and civil servants to serve in an international organization at some point in their career. In the 21st century, we can't solve problems alone. We need the cooperation of other countries to make our power more effective. The United States needs to learn to cooperate.

All countries are not the same. Some countries punch above their weight. Brazil, Mexico, Canada, have influence because they have good policies as well as size. But smaller countries also need to be paid attention to **as well**. We have to look at the sub-regional settings.



The United States needs a better policy to address trade issues as well. Most Latin Americans believe in free trade, but do not support how it has been approached,

because its social and political costs have not been addressed. Even inside the United States, voices have risen against free trade. Free trade has huge impacts everywhere, and it is necessary to do a better job of taking social dislocations into account. The United States also needs to change its approach in sectors where its protectionism has traditionally belied its rhetoric, such as steel and agriculture. Conversely, the flow of small weapons through the United States towards Latin America – particularly Mexico – has been far too free. That is one illegal activity that must be stopped.

Another problem is the migration policy and the deportations that are carried out, sometimes without even informing our neighbors. We have every right to deport aliens who have committed crimes, but when we deport them, we must account for the impact on the receiving country, or we will simply be strengthening international gangs and transnational crime.

A “European Union” of the Americas is out of the question. Cooperation in the Western Hemisphere is defined politically, not economically. In the EU, there is an obligation of richer states toward poorer states. The United States is not prepared to subsidize its neighbors’ weaker economies as happens in the European Union. Moreover, from a Latin American perspective, the United States is an unreliable partner and has too much power already. Smaller countries see their sovereignty threatened by the United States. And in fact, the United States is also not interested in sacrificing sovereignty, even to attain common objectives. At this point, it would be important for more Americans to understand that sovereignty can be strengthened through cooperation.

A functioning EU of Latin America without the United States is also unlikely. Most of the region’s countries have a greater tradition of uniting against the United States than in cooperating with each other.

Latin America is not a cooperative region. The tragedy of Venezuela, for example, is petroleum. The revenues have never been properly distributed. Chavez is a product of the people who preceded him. In the mid-1970s Venezuela asserted control over the operations of petroleum companies and created PDVSA. Venezuela has yet to find a working formula. In the words of Mariategui, "the independent history of each of Latin America's countries is an anti-history of each of its neighbors."

The disparity of power between the United States and its neighbors creates many special problems. But if the United States had better relations with other major world countries, it would also improve relations with Latin America. It is a mistake to think that Latin America can be carved out from the world. The times of the Monroe Doctrine are over. For example, relations between Latin America and China are growing, are good for the economy, and therefore in the interest of the United States, as it wants to have stable and prosperous neighbors. Moreover, in today's world, unless these countries can deal with others, they won't be stable.

The United States has an imperial

outlook in Latin America, but it does not have a colonialist outlook. An imperial outlook lacks the element of responsibility which comes with colonialism. Latin Americans often think that the United States wants to influence them more than it really does. The American imperial outlook is not regionally defined, but globally defined. US political leaders tend to think that US power is essential to the stability all regions of the world, not just to Latin America. And US businessmen also have a global outlook. When NAFTA was signed, for example, some American business men were not happy, as they saw their interests as global, and thought they might be limited to this hemisphere.

The Organization of American States, OAS is not the Monroe doctrine. The survival of a functioning western hemisphere relationship is of as much interest for Latin America as for the United States. The problem with the OAS is that the United States lacks the interest to work seriously on regional problems such as drugs and the environment that require a multilateral framework to be dealt with successfully. Regionalism can be very helpful but it must be founded on the basis of universal principles, participation and support.



Signing of the NAFTA Treaty, December 17, 1992 by U.S. President Bush, Canadian Prime Minister Mulroney, and Mexican President Salinas.

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