

THE UNITED STATES AND LATIN AMERICA: COLD WAR CHRONOLOGY



1945

- Meeting in Mexico City, the United States and Latin American nations issue the Act of Chapultepec, pledging collective security. The meeting represents the highpoint of inter-American wartime cooperation.
- President Franklin Delano Roosevelt dies in April and is succeeded by Vice President Harry S. Truman. President Roosevelt has been associated in Latin America with the Good Neighbor Policy and the principle of non-intervention.
- World War II ends with the surrender of Germany in May and Japan in August.

1946

- The United States unsuccessfully tries to persuade Argentines not to elect Juan Perón as president of Argentina.
- The Truman administration declines to schedule an economic conference with Latin Americans to discuss economic aid.

1947

- In March, President Truman pronounces his "Truman Doctrine." The policy is established that the United States will assist anticommunist forces.
- Secretary of State George Marshall delivers a speech in June calling for economic assistance for postwar Europe. The "Marshall Plan" will ensue the next year.
- George Kennan publishes an article in *Foreign Affairs* that will serve as the basis for the U.S. policy of "containing" the Soviet Union and communism.
- The United States concludes in September the Rio Treaty with Latin America. Western Hemisphere nations will form a military alliance against aggression.

1948

- In a policy paper, NSC 16, the State Department concludes in March that communism is not a threat in Latin America.
- At an inter-American meeting in April in Bogotá, Secretary of State Marshall informs delegates that there will not be a "Marshall Plan for Latin America." Delegates establish the Organization of American States, which incorporates the non-intervention principle.
- In November, military officers in Venezuela overthrow a constitutional government. The military action seemingly signals the end of the movement toward democracy and social reform throughout the region.
- On 10 December, the United Nations adopts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Eleanor Roosevelt, widow of President Roosevelt, had led the movement to adopt the declaration.

1949

- In September, the United States announces that the Soviet Union has successfully tested an atomic weapon.
- Communist leader Mao Zedong proclaims on 1 October the People's Republic of China.

1950

- In February, Senator Joseph McCarthy makes sensational allegations about Communist influence within the U.S. government.
- George Kennan tours Latin America and subsequently submits report recommending support for anti-Communists in Latin America even if they are authoritarian and undemocratic.
- In April, President Truman secretly approves the policy paper NSC 68/2, which calls on the United States to confront the Soviet Union globally with awesome military power.
- In April, Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America Edward Miller delivers his "Miller Doctrine" speech, suggesting that in the fight against communism the United States could not abide by the non-intervention principle.
- In May, the Truman administration adopts the policy paper NSC 56/2, authorizing military aid for Latin America to fight the Cold War. Aid to Latin American militaries begins in 1951.
- In June, the Korean War begins when North Korea invades South Korea.

951

- The Washington Conference concludes in April, with the Truman administration unable to persuade most Latin American nations to contribute troops for the Korean War. The failure signals the end of the cooperation that characterized inter-American relations during World War II.

1952

- In March, Fulgencio Batista seizes power in Cuba.
- In June, Guatemala issues Decree 900, expropriating large landholdings, including properties of the United Fruit Company.
- President Truman recognizes the Bolivian Revolution in June. Assured of the non-Communist nature of the revolution, both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations provide economic assistance to Bolivia.
- In July, President Truman approves PBFORTUNE, a covert plan to overthrow the Guatemalan government.
- In October, Secretary of State Dean Acheson halts PBFORTUNE.

1953

- President Dwight D. Eisenhower takes office.
- In March, President Eisenhower approves policy paper NSC 144/1 that confidentially notes that the United States cannot observe the non-intervention principle in the Cold War.
- On 26 July, Fidel Castro leads Cuban rebels on an assault on Moncada army barracks in an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the government of Fulgencio Batista.
- In August, President Eisenhower approves PBSUCCESS, a covert plan to overthrow the Guatemalan government.
- With U.S. approval, the United Kingdom overthrows in October the elected government of Cheddi Jagan in British Guiana.

1954

- With CIA backing, Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas overthrows in June the constitutional Guatemalan government of President Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán.
- In September, U.S. analysts, operating under PBHISTORY, report that they can find no evidence in Guatemalan archives of links between President Arbenz and international communism.
- A presidential panel, the Doolittle Commission, recommends that the United States improve its abilities to intervene covertly in other nations.
- The Eisenhower administration awards the Legion of Merit to Marcos Pérez Jiménez, the dictator of Venezuela.

1955

- In September, President Juan Perón is overthrown by the Argentine military. Three decades of political instability ensue in Argentina.

1956

- On 2 December, Fidel Castro and supporters land in Cuba on a small boat, the *Granma*. Cuban forces kill most of the invaders. Castro and the survivors seek refuge in Cuban mountains in the eastern part of the island.

1957

- In July, President Castillo Armas of Guatemala is assassinated.

1958

- In January, Colonel Marcos Pérez Jiménez, the dictator of Venezuela, is overthrown by a popular movement. His overthrow marks a movement toward constitutional regimes throughout the region.
- With the Castro insurgency spreading, the United States cuts off arms shipments to Batista in March.
- Vice President Richard Nixon travels to South America and is threatened with physical harm during a riot in May in Caracas, Venezuela.
- The Marxist political leader, Salvador Allende, nearly wins Chilean presidential election held in September.

1959

- In January, Fidel Castro assumes power in Cuba.
- In April, the revolutionary government of Cuba adopts an extensive agrarian reform law.
- In April, Castro meets with Vice President Nixon in Washington.
- In December, Colonel J. C. King of the CIA calls for the "elimination" of Castro.

1960

- In February, Cuba signs a commercial agreement with the Soviet Union.
- In March, President Eisenhower authorizes a program to overthrow Castro.
- President Eisenhower announces the Social Progress Trust Fund for Latin America. The July announcement breaks with the fifteen-year U.S. policy of not providing extensive economic assistance to the region.
- The MR-13 Rebellion breaks out in Guatemala in November. The rebels protest both social injustice and the U.S. role in their country. More than three decades of political violence in Guatemala will ensue.

1961

- On 3 January, President Eisenhower breaks diplomatic relations with Cuba.
- On 6 January, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's delivers his "Wars of National Liberation Speech."
- On 19 January, President Eisenhower warns President-elect John F. Kennedy that the United States cannot live with Fidel Castro. Kennedy takes office the next day.
- On 1 March, President Kennedy creates the Peace Corps. Between 1961 and 1969, more than 19,000 U.S. citizens serve in Latin America.
- In March, President Kennedy announces his Alliance for Progress eco-

- On 17-19 April, Cuban exiles invade at the Bay of Pigs. Castro's forces easily rout the invaders.
- On May 30, Dominican dissidents assassinate Rafael Trujillo, dictator of the Dominican Republic. The dissidents had received weapons from the United States.
- In early June, President Kennedy meets with Soviet Premier Khrushchev in Vienna. Kennedy concludes that Khrushchev will support revolution in Latin America.
- The United States meets in August with Latin American nations at Punta del Este, Uruguay, to plan the Alliance for Progress.
- In October, President Kennedy hosts Prime Minister Cheddi Jagan of British Guiana in the White House. Kennedy decides that Jagan must not be allowed to be the leader of an independent Guyana.
- In November, President Kennedy authorizes Operation Mongoose, a covert plan to destabilize Cuba.
- The Kennedy administration employs diplomatic and military pressure to force the remaining members of the Trujillo family out of the Dominican Republic.

1962

- In late March, the Argentine military overthrows President Arturo Frondizi. Frondizi had angered the Kennedy administration by maintaining relations with Cuba.
- Attorney General Robert Kennedy receives a briefing in May on U.S. efforts to assassinate Castro.
- In August, the Kennedy administration begins to provide extensive aid to Latin American police forces through the Office of Public Safety (OPS).
- The Cuban Missile Crisis erupts in October.
- On 20 November, President Kennedy announces the end of the Cuban Missile Crisis but continues covert efforts to destabilize Cuba.
- In December, Attorney General Kennedy journeys to Brazil to inform President João Goulart of U.S. displeasure with his domestic and international policies.

1963

- In March, the Kennedy administration encourages a military seizure of power in Guatemala to prevent former President Juan José Arévalo from returning to office.
- In June President Kennedy, using the rubric of "Higher Authority," authorizes a sabotage campaign against Cuba.
- On 30 June, President Kennedy meets with Prime Minister Harold Macmillan in England and demands that the United Kingdom prevent Jagan from leading an independent Guyana.
- In September, President Juan Bosch of the Dominican Republic is over-

- In November, Venezuela announces it has discovered a cache of Cuban arms on the Venezuelan coast.
- On November 18, President Kennedy gives his last speech on inter-American affairs, pronounces the “Kennedy Doctrine,” and says that Castro is a “barrier” to be removed.
- On 22 November, President Kennedy is assassinated. On the same day, the CIA continues the assassination plots against Castro, meeting with “AM/Lash” in Paris.
- In December, Venezuela conducts a successful presidential election, despite threats from Cuban-inspired insurgents.

1964

- In January, riots break out in Panama over U.S. policies in the Canal Zone. Negotiations will ensue to change the U.S. control over the Panama Canal and lead to the Canal Treaties of 1977–78.
- In March, Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Mann pronounces his “Mann Doctrine.” The United States will work with military regimes to prevent communism.
- In April, the Brazilian military, with U.S. encouragement, overthrows President Goulart. Two decades of military dictatorship ensues.
- Eduardo Frei, the U.S.-supported candidate, defeats Salvador Allende in the September Chilean presidential election.
- Cheddi Jagan is denied power in December in a proportional representation election system in British Guiana. Forbes Burnham takes power and creates a dictatorship in independent Guyana that will last two decades.

1965

- In March, President Johnson begins his massive buildup of U.S. ground forces in Vietnam.
- In late April, the United States invades the Dominican Republic.
- On 2 May, President Johnson pronounces his “Johnson Doctrine,” vowing to prevent communism in the hemisphere.
- In June, President Johnson shuts down covert war against Castro.

1966

- The Guatemalan military, with U.S. assistance, launches in March *Operación Limpieza*, a counterinsurgency campaign.
- In April, Senator J. William Fulbright, chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, delivers his “Arrogance of Power” speech. Fulbright denounces President Johnson’s invasion of the Dominican Republic and his Vietnam policy.
- Joaquín Balaguer, the U.S.-backed candidate, wins in June the presidential election in the Dominican Republic.

- In October, Che Guevara enters Bolivia with the goal of leading a revolutionary movement.

1967

- In October, Bolivian military forces, trained by the United States, capture and execute Che Guevara.

1968

- In September, the Conference of Latin American Bishops, meeting in Medellín, Colombia, issues a statement calling for the organization of the poor at the local level.
- The United States helps Forbes Burnham of Guyana rig the election, which is held in December.
- In December, Brazil’s military rulers issue Decree 5, which outlaws dissent in the country.

1969

- President Richard Nixon takes office and makes Henry Kissinger his chief foreign-policy advisor.
- In May, Latin American delegates issue the Consensus of Viña del Mar. They call for fairer terms of trade for Latin America. The delegates tacitly concede that the Alliance for Progress has not transformed the region.
- In July, the Nixon administration adopts its policy paper for Latin America, NSSM 15. The United States should respond to Latin America’s trade concerns.
- Governor Nelson Rockefeller submits in August his report to President Nixon. Rockefeller agrees that the United States should address trade issues. Rockefeller also suggests that the Latin American military will “modernize” the region.
- On 31 October, President Nixon delivers his only major address on inter-American affairs. He pledges a new attitude toward the region.

1970

- Salvador Allende wins a plurality of votes in the September presidential election in Chile.
- On 15 September, the Nixon administration initiates Project FUBELT to block Allende from becoming president.
- On 22 October, General René Schneider, a constitutionalist, is assassinated by Chilean military men.
- On 24 October, the Chilean legislature ratifies the results of the presidential election. Salvador Allende takes office in November.
- On 9 November, President Nixon adopts policy paper NSDM 93. The United States will pursue a policy of hostility toward Allende.

1971

- President Nixon hosts Emilio Garrastazú Médici, the military dictator of Brazil, in Washington in December. The leaders agree to cooperate in opposing Allende.

1972

- An earthquake devastates Managua in December. The Nicaraguan government of Anastasio Somoza Debayle embezzles international relief aid.

1973

- In January, the United States signs the Paris Accords, ending the U.S. war in Vietnam.
- In March, Allende's political coalition, *Unidad Popular*, increases its strength in legislative elections.
- In June, the military seizes effective power in Uruguay, ending the country's long history of constitutionalism.
- In August, Chilean truckers launch a strike. The CIA funds groups that support strikers. Political and economic chaos spreads throughout the country.
- On 11 September, the Chilean military, led by General Augusto Pinochet, overthrows Allende. President Allende commits suicide.
- On 13 September, the United States rushes aid to Pinochet and grants him diplomatic recognition on 24 September. Chile will have seventeen years of military rule under General Pinochet.
- After eighteen years of exile, Juan Perón returns to Argentina, wins a presidential election, and becomes president in October. His wife, Isabel Martínez Perón, is elected vice president.

1974

- In July, Argentine President Juan Perón dies in office and is succeeded by Isabel Perón.
- In August, President Nixon resigns, after being impeached for "high crimes and misdemeanors" by the House of Representatives. Gerald Ford becomes president.
- In September, Chilean General Carlos Prats and his wife, who are living in exile in Buenos Aires, are assassinated by Chilean intelligence agents.
- The U.S. Congress abolishes the Office of Public Safety in response to reports of human rights abuses carried out by U.S.-trained police officers in countries such as Uruguay.

1975

- In November, Chile organizes Operation Condor, a form of state-sponsored international terrorism. The military dictatorships of Southern Cone countries will cooperate to hunt down political leftists in exile.

- A congressional committee, the Church Committee, releases reports documenting the U.S. involvement in the assassination efforts against Fidel Castro, Rafael Trujillo, and General Schneider and the U.S. involvement in the overthrow of President Allende.

1976

- In March, Argentine generals overthrow President Isabel Perón, seize power, and launch their "dirty war" against political leftists.
- In June, Secretary of State Kissinger meets with General Pinochet in Santiago and assures him of U.S. support. Kissinger also delivers a speech defending human rights principles.
- In September, Orlando Letelier, the former Chilean ambassador to the United States, and Ronni Moffitt, a U.S. citizen, are assassinated in Washington, D.C., by Chilean agents.
- Secretary Kissinger meets in October with the Argentine foreign minister in Washington and assures him of U.S. support for Argentina's war against radicals.

1977

- President Jimmy Carter takes office. He emphasizes his commitment to human rights principles in a speech to the United Nations in March.
- The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo begin to march, protesting the disappearance of their children in Argentina.
- In September, the United States and Panama sign treaties giving Panama control over the Panama Canal by the end of the century. The U.S. Senate ratifies the treaties the next year.

1978

- In January, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, the editor of *La Prensa* and a critic of the Somoza dynasty in Nicaragua, is assassinated. The civil war in Nicaragua intensifies.

1979

- Anastasio Somoza Debayle, the dictator of Nicaragua, flees in July. The revolutionary organization, the Sandinistas, take power.
- In September, the Argentine military, responding to U.S. pressure, releases Jacobo Timerman, a publisher and human rights activist, from prison.
- In October, General Carlos Humberto Romero, the dictator of El Salvador, is overthrown by a military-civilian coalition that pledges to bring reform to the country.

1980

- In March, Óscar Romero, the archbishop of San Salvador and a human rights crusader, is assassinated while celebrating Mass.

- In December, four Roman Catholic nuns, who are U.S. citizens, are murdered by Salvadoran military forces.

1981

- President Ronald Reagan takes office in January.
- In February, the Reagan administration issues a White Paper, alleging Sandinista interference in El Salvador.
- In March, President Reagan approves military aid for El Salvador that will eventually amount to over \$1 billion in the 1980s.
- In April, the Reagan administration suspends the Carter administration's economic aid program for Nicaragua.
- In November, President Reagan authorizes a program, NSDD 17, to overthrow the Sandinista government of Nicaragua.
- In November, Salvadoran security forces massacre more than eight hundred civilians in the village of El Mozote.

1982

- In April, the military rulers of Argentina launch an invasion of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas). The United Kingdom's defeat of Argentine forces and recapture of the Falklands in June hastens the end of the military dictatorship.
- In July, the Guatemalan military begins to execute Operation Sofía, an attack on Mayan communities.
- In December, Gabriel García Márquez, the Colombian novelist, gives his Nobel Prize speech lamenting the violence in Latin America.
- At a news briefing in December, President Reagan defends the Guatemalan leader, General Efraín Ríos Montt, who is overseeing the destruction of Mayan villages.
- In late December, Congress passes and President Reagan signs the first of the Boland Amendments, which restricts U.S. aid to Nicaraguan opponents of the Sandinistas.

1983

- In July, Latin American leaders, the Contadora Group, call for the end of foreign intervention in Central America.
- In October, the United States invades Grenada and overthrows the leftist regime.
- Democracy is restored in Argentina with inauguration in December of President Raúl Alfonsín.

1984

- In January, a U.S. commission headed by Henry Kissinger issues a report calling for both economic and military aid to Central America.

- In May, the U.S.-backed candidate, José Napoleón Duarte, wins the presidential election in El Salvador.
- The study *Nunca Mas* is published in Argentina. It exposes the atrocities committed by the Argentine military during the dirty war.

1985

- Democracy is restored in Brazil with the election in January of Tancredo Neves as president.
- At a February news conference, President Reagan admits that it is U.S. policy to overthrow the Sandinista government of Nicaragua.
- Democracy is restored in Uruguay with the inauguration in March of President Julio María Sanguinetti.

1986

- In June, the World Court finds the United States guilty of violating Nicaragua's sovereignty.
- In November, U.S. citizens learn of the Iran-contra scandal. The Reagan administration has been violating the Boland Amendments, illegally funding the Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries or *contras*.
- The archbishop of São Paulo publishes *Nunca Mais*, documenting atrocities committed by the Brazilian military.

1987

- In August, Central American presidents sign a peace agreement.
- President Óscar Arias Sánchez of Costa Rica wins the Nobel Prize for Peace for his efforts to mediate the conflicts in Central America.

1988

- In a plebiscite held in October, Chileans vote to reject the continuation of General Pinochet in office.

1989

- In January, President George H. W. Bush takes office.
- In November, the Berlin Wall is toppled, signaling the end of the Cold War.
- In November, military forces in El Salvador murder six Jesuit priests on their university campus.
- In December, U.S. military forces invade Panama and arrest Manuel Noriega.

1990

- In Chile, democracy is restored in March, with General Pinochet relinquishing power and the election of Patricio Aylwin as president.

- The Sandinistas relinquish power in April in Nicaragua, with Violeta Chamorro becoming president.
- In May, Arthur M. Schlesinger publicly apologizes to Cheddi Jagan for U.S. hostility toward him during the Kennedy administration.

1991

- In February, the Rettig Report is released, documenting political murders in Chile during the Pinochet regime.
- The Soviet Union collapses in August, and the new leader, Boris Yeltsin, subsequently abolishes the Communist Party in Russia.
- In September, the Bush administration and the new government in Nicaragua settle the World Court judgment against the United States.

1992

- In January, the civil war in El Salvador ends, with the government and leftist groups signing a peace accord.
- In October, Cheddi Jagan is elected the head of state of Guyana. Former President Carter supervises the election.
- Rigoberta Menchú, a Guatemalan human rights activist and representative of indigenous communities, is awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace.

1993

- In January, President Bill Clinton takes office.
- Russia withdraws troops from Cuba. Soviet troops had been in Cuba since 1962.

1996

- In December, the civil war in Guatemala ends with the signing of a peace accord between the government and leftist groups.

1998

- In April Bishop Juan José Gerardi of Guatemala is murdered two days after the release of his study, *Nunca Mas*, which documents human rights abuses by security forces.
- In October, General Pinochet is arrested in London. A judge in Spain has requested his extradition to stand trial for human rights abuses.

1999

- In February, an international commission releases a report, *Guatemala: Memory of Silence*, which documents human rights abuses in Guatemala from 1954 to 1996.
- President Clinton apologizes for the U.S. role in the Guatemalan civil war.
- President Clinton orders the declassification of records relating to the U.S. role in the overthrow of Salvador Allende and subsequent support for

2000

- In March 2000, General Pinochet is released on medical grounds by the United Kingdom and returns to Chile.
- In December, the Clinton administration closes the School of the Americas. It had trained Latin American military officers for five decades. It reopens the next year as the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation.

2001

- In January, President George W. Bush takes office.

2002

- In April, Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez survives an attempt to overthrow him. The George W. Bush administration approved of the attempt.

2003

- Secretary of State Colin Powell apologizes for the U.S. role in the overthrow of Allende in Chile.

2004

- In November, in Chile the first part of the Valech Report is released, detailing human rights abuses by security forces during the Pinochet regime. A second part of the report is released in 2005.

2006

- In March, Patricia Derian, who served as assistant secretary of state for human rights during the Carter administration, receives an award from Argentina for her defense of human rights during Argentina's military rule.
- In July, an ailing Fidel Castro transfers his duties as president and head of the Communist Party to his brother Raúl Castro.
- In December, General Pinochet dies in Chile, having never stood trial.

2008

- In June, Manuel Contreras, the head of Operation Condor, receives two life sentences from a Chilean court for the assassination of General Prats and his wife.
- In September, Michelle Bachelet of Chile presents an award to Senator Edward M. Kennedy for his defense of human rights during the Pinochet years.
- In October, an Argentine court resentsences General Jorge Videla to military prison for human rights abuses. General Videla had previously been convicted in 1985.

2009

- In October, an Uruguayan court sentences the nation's last dictator, General

- In December, a Chilean judge rules that former President Eduardo Frei had been poisoned in the early 1980s by agents of the Pinochet regime.

2010

- In April, Reynaldo Bignone, the last leader of Argentina's dictatorship, receives a twenty-five-year sentence for human rights abuses from an Argentine court.