

# 2019 Kalman Silvert Lecture

by **Lars Schoultz**

## Improving Latin Americans

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I never knew a man who had better motives for all the trouble he caused.

—Graham Greene, *The Quiet American*

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If they have managed to make it this far, most early baby boomers are now retiring, including one born prematurely in 1942. We came of age in the 1960s, a time when US foreign policy officials believed that Latin Americans were caught up in what was called “the revolution of rising expectations.” A substantial majority also believed that the containment of communism required the United States to help Latin Americans fulfill these expectations. After arguing in the 1950s that the region was “not in the line of Soviet advance,” in the early 1960s President Kennedy repeatedly warned that Latin America had become “the most dangerous area in the world.”

So it was that our parents’ generation started this ball rolling, but then we boomers took over and transformed development assistance from a rudimentary activity into today’s sophisticated uplifting industry, comparable in its own modest way to what happened to the telephone after Alexander Graham Bell.

Much of this transformation was based on a set of long-standing beliefs about Latin Americans and how to improve them. As in the Kalman Silvert address at LASA’s Boston congress, the pages that follow are an exploration of these beliefs, using the current debate over Central American immigration as a focus. It is a cautionary tale, a warning to the generation that follows.

The participants in today’s immigration debate can be placed into two categories. On one side are the *traditionalists*, who are realists in the political science sense of the word: they believe the purpose of foreign policy is to promote and protect a nation’s interests, period. Anything else is ancillary. These migration realists are called traditionalists because they advocate doing what governments traditionally do when confronted with an immigration problem: they narrow the funnel through which migrants flow.

That narrowing is their overarching strategy, and it is a constant, but the traditionalists’ tactics to implement this strategy have varied to fit the circumstances. At one point in US history the principal funneling tactic was to screen entrants at places like Ellis Island. Another tactic has been to enact laws that have the effect of denying entry to certain groups—the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act or the 1924 National Origins Act.

Today, the primary traditionalist tactic is to build a wall.

On the other side of today’s immigration debate are Washington’s *progressives*, so named because their beliefs closely resemble the thinking of policymakers during the Progressive Era in the first two decades of the twentieth century, even if the circumstances differ. Today’s progressives concede that the United States has a legitimate interest in controlling immigration, but they have a softer side, believing, for example, that accepting refugees is important in and of itself—the right thing to do. Progressives also believe a wall is no solution for the recent wave of Central American immigration; they say that tide will only ebb when Central Americans are more satisfied with conditions at home, and the United States should lend a hand. As the devoutly progressive *New York Times* editorialized last November, “Any immigration plan has to include

serious development aid to Central America's troubled states. Cutting off what little aid they get, as Mr. Trump has threatened to do, will only create more caravans."<sup>1</sup>

The progressives' strategy, then, is to provide Central Americans with development assistance,<sup>2</sup> but their tactics also vary. Progressives once focused on economic development; today they focus on political development—on improving Latin Americans' governance.

Before turning to the beliefs underlying these quite different strategies and how they play out in today's Washington, candid baby boomers would want readers to know that their generation agrees on one thing: most Latin Americans are "underdeveloped." While boomer traditionalists regularly blurt this out, progressives are more circumspect. Nonetheless, it has never been difficult for researchers to examine progressives' behavior and then infer this belief's existence. Specifically, when progressives advocate for development assistance, by definition they are expressing a belief that the recipients are insufficiently developed. Progressives refer to them as "developing peoples."

### What Boomers Inherited

This belief in Latin Americans' need for improvement was present from the very beginning of US–Latin American relations. Indeed, the State Department's nineteenth-century archives are packed to overflowing with reports from US envoys similar to this one about Ecuadorans: "I witnessed little else than ignorance, indolence, wretchedness, dishonesty, and misery, on the part of the great mass of the people, and selfishness, low-cunning, sordid ambition, avarice, and blood-thirsty revenge on that of those who either lead or force the unconscious, unthinking multitude." A good one-sentence summary of this nineteenth-century thinking came in a US envoy's dispatch from Brazil: "There is a sad defect somewhere either in the institutions of the country, or the temper and habits of the people." Generally these were simple observations, but occasionally they were accompanied by a recommendation that Washington do something about those defects—

that the United States "force these Spanish American Republics to keep the peace" or, more gently, that "in taking them cordially by the hand we may lead them upward."<sup>3</sup>

At one point annexation was the most frequently proposed solution, but after the mid-nineteenth-century war with Mexico and then the Civil War (which ended the South's interest in more slave states), the dominant belief was that absorbing Latin Americans would spell nothing but trouble. In the post-Civil War debate about accepting the Dominican Republic's offer to be annexed, most senators nodded in agreement when one of their colleagues warned that "if you incorporate those tropical countries with the Republic of the United States, you will have to incorporate their people too. . . . Do not touch a scheme like this; do not trifle with that which may poison the future of this great nation, beware of the tropics."<sup>4</sup>

Since then—the early 1870s—a consensus has existed that it is inadvisable to expand the nation's boundaries if it entails the addition of Latin Americans. The single exception, Puerto Rico, was just that—an exception, and one that almost everyone in Washington still hopes will never be repeated.

Then at the turn from the nineteenth into the twentieth century came what may be the most important single step in the two-century history of US policy toward Latin America: the United States moved from merely observing these sad defects to helping Latin Americans overcome them. This move was triggered by the 1898 Spanish-American War, when the victors required Spain to hand over Guam, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. Now, here on the cusp of the Progressive Era, the United States had to decide what to do with these tropical people. Progressives decided to improve them.

Having taken this step atop a slippery slope, the United States quickly slid into an acquire-and-develop policy. Cuba and Puerto Rico were followed almost immediately by Panama and then Nicaragua, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. No one called them colonies; they were "protectorates."

In addition to infrastructure projects (many in Cuba and Panama, fewer in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, almost none in Nicaragua), in each case the progressives' strategy to assist these Latin Americans involved three tactics. The first was to establish order through the US military, which created and trained local constabularies. Until these new constables were prepared to maintain order, US soldiers stayed to keep citizens from fighting among themselves. Then, once order had been established, progressives began sending democracy doctors to create and improve governance—to help these protected Latin Americans write their laws and even their constitutions, and especially to supervise their elections. In 1913 President Woodrow Wilson said his policy was to teach Latin Americans to elect good men. For a third tactic, progressives sent money doctors to improve the way Latin Americans handled their finances.

Now, a century later, all three tactics have been adopted by today's baby boomers.

Honduras, the principal source of the recent migrant caravans, did not become one of these protectorates, but it was not for lack of trying. The effort began in 1911, when the Taft administration's secretary of state, Philander Knox, notified Congress that "there is no hope for peace and prosperity for Honduras except through the United States." Meanwhile, his assistant secretary informed the press that Honduras "has politically, financially and economically about as bad a record for stability as could be found on the face of the earth."<sup>5</sup>

Since none of today's development institutions existed, Secretary Knox's solution was for Wall Street to loan Hondurans some money, with repayment guaranteed by converting Honduras into another protectorate. Although the Knox-Paredes Treaty failed to gain approval by either country's legislature, this rejection took no wind out of the progressives' sails. Within a few months the Marines had landed next door in Nicaragua, and the United States did not abandon that protectorate until 1933.

Washington's motivation during this two-decade period was complex. US interests were involved—everything from thwarting German adventurism (real or imagined) to building a canal—but the

archives strongly suggest that most of these early progressives were driven primarily by a broad impulse to help those who needed assistance, to develop the underdeveloped. Many considered it an obligation.

### **The Cold War: Creating Uplifting Institutions**

Now fast-forward from the Progressive Era to the mid-twentieth century and the first intensive effort to improve Latin Americans. These were the dark days of the Cold War, when all foreign and much domestic policy was being made in an anticommunist trance. Senator Joseph McCarthy was an outlier in many ways but was not the only one who warned that "today we are engaged in a final, all-out battle between communistic atheism and Christianity. The modern champions of communism have selected this as the time. And, ladies and gentlemen, the chips are down—they are truly down."<sup>6</sup>

That was in 1950. A decade later, when Cuba's revolutionaries appeared to be moving their chips to the Soviet side of the table, the best and the brightest of JFK's generation decided that development assistance would serve US interests by making Latin Americans less sympathetic to communist appeals. If the United States could improve their daily lives, they would not move their chips.

Cuba was lost by 1961, and the State Department worried that Honduras might be next: "With stagnation in recent years, unrest is growing. Serious obstacles to advancement are dishonest and inefficient administration, poor transportation and difficult terrain, and extremely low educational levels. About two-thirds of the 2 million population is illiterate."<sup>7</sup>

Washington responded with the region-wide Alliance for Progress, administered by a new Agency for International Development (AID or, as the agency now prefers, USAID). Cold War progressives also applauded the creation of a Peace Corps, which sent 5,720 volunteers to Honduras. (Safety concerns led to their withdrawal in 2012.)

During AID's first half century, Honduras received over \$3 billion in all forms of assistance, but with significant year-to-year variation. The Contra War period of the 1980s was the high until recently, but that is now being surpassed. In fiscal year (FY) 2017 the United States spent \$180,947,214 on all types of assistance.<sup>8</sup>

Of that \$180 million, the Agency for International Development was responsible for spending 82 percent, or \$149,375,791. Here is what it was doing:

In Honduras, USAID programs strengthen the participation of marginalized groups in local and national governance; increase food security for the poorest sectors of society; support renewable energy and environmental conservation; expand basic education and skills training for at-risk youth and adults; and improve decentralized health care in terms of quality and access for local citizens and civil society. Efforts also address citizen security through community-based crime prevention activities. USAID projects work to spur economic growth, advance social justice, improve education and health, and engage the poorest members of Honduran society in the country's development.<sup>9</sup>

Ten verbs (underlined) in one three-sentence paragraph is close to par for AID's course. Those verbs suggest that the United States is now addressing almost every social, political, and economic problem Hondurans might have. It is doing the same for Guatemalans and Salvadorans, guided today by AID's Country Roadmaps, "an analytic tool that visualizes each country's overall level of self-reliance and performance on each of 17 self-reliance metrics."<sup>10</sup> We have come a long way since Alexander Graham Bell.

## The Results

Despite this development assistance, Honduras appears to be moving backward. In addition to the unfiltered evidence in front of our eyes at the border, Amnesty International notes that Hondurans go about their daily lives in "a general climate of crime and violence." Human Rights Watch agrees: "Violent crime is rampant." Earlier this year, in May, Azam Ahmed titled his *New York*

*Times* article "Either They Kill Us or We Kill Them." A month earlier, Sonia Nazario had titled her *New York Times* article "Someone Is Always Trying to Kill You." "Migrants are fleeing a society controlled by criminals," she writes. "Unlike much of the world, where most murdered women are killed by their husbands, partners or family members, half in Honduras are killed by drug cartels and gangs. And the ways they are being killed—shot in the vagina, cut to bits, strangled in front of their children, skinned alive—have women running for the border."<sup>11</sup>

This is the situation after more than six decades of continuous US assistance.

When challenged by these negative assessments, progressive boomers fall back on two responses. First, they argue, conditions in Honduras would be even worse without US aid. "How much worse could it be?" might be Ahmed's and Nazario's response, but that would only trigger an interminable debate about a counterfactual.

The second boomer response is that the United States is getting better at this development business, and now the United States is making real progress. Perhaps. But perhaps we should consider the possibility that decade after decade of development assistance has not simply failed but may be making a bad situation worse. That possibility would not occur to the boomers responsible for today's assistance.

Unfortunately, no one has yet figured out how to conduct a reliable study of this "more harm than good" hypothesis. Clearly, there is no nefarious plot of the type boomers once attributed to a money-grubbing Wall Street or a trigger-happy Pentagon. Instead, a useful focus for the next generation of researchers might be on the mentality—the constellation of beliefs—that boomers have brought to the task of improving other peoples and are now passing along to Generation X. Two of these beliefs seem especially relevant.

## Belief 1: Establish Order

The first belief is that *order is a prerequisite of progress*. Order makes progress possible.

When today's progressives talk today about establishing order, they are talking about improving "state capacity," an anodyne term we boomers favor. It can have an almost infinite number of dimensions, but if dollars are the metric then the most important one of these dimensions has always been the improvement of Latin America's military and police, the two parts of the state that provide order. The US Department of Defense has been training and arming the Honduran military continuously since 1954, and various Washington agencies have been training and equipping the Honduran police since 1963.

Honduras currently hosts the Pentagon's Joint Task Force Bravo, with five hundred to six hundred US troops stationed at a base near Palmerola. It is a regional facility for various activities in all of Central America, but the Department of Defense provided Hondurans with \$20.3 million in straight bilateral aid in FY 2017. A current example are the TIGRES being trained by the US Army's Green Berets and the Policía Nacional de Colombia.<sup>12</sup> The goal is to create an uncorrupted unit of the national police, which is widely considered both incompetent and corrupt.

In addition, the FBI is helping establish order with its Transnational Anti-Gang Unit. And since gangs deal drugs, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is doing much the same, while the Department of State is helping establish order with its Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL). And the Department of Homeland Security is working with all these US institutions plus the Agency for International Development to create and then coordinate task forces to address specific problems. As with all these law-and-order-focused activities, each task force is composed of US advisers and Honduran security forces. Progressive boomers classify all this as building state capacity—the capacity to maintain order.

The outcome? Here is the most recent assessment of the police by Human Rights Watch: "Efforts to reform the institutions responsible for providing public security have made little progress. Marred

by corruption and abuse, the judiciary and police remain largely ineffective. Impunity for crime and human rights abuses is the norm."<sup>13</sup>

It is easier to assess the Honduran military if we go back a decade to 2008–2009, when it looked as if a fairly elected Honduran government led by Manuel Zelaya might rewrite the constitution, perhaps in ways that could lead to dramatic changes. What kind of changes? Well, the Zelaya government had already aligned itself with Hugo Chavez's left-leaning ALBA, and in 2008 it had raised the minimum wage by an average of 58.9 percent.

Clearly alarmed, in 2009 the Hondurans who disapproved of the linkage to ALBA, the Hondurans who disliked paying increased wages, and the Hondurans who worried about amending the constitution—basically, the Honduran elite—turned to the military, which yanked an elected president from his bed and flew him out of the country. Then an interim government conducted an election, which was won by the leader of the conservative National Party, who was the candidate defeated by President Zelaya in the 2005 election.

As the ousted interior minister explained, Honduran progressives had miscalculated: "The impression that stuck with the traditional political class and with the most conservative business leaders of the country was that Zelaya had taken a dangerous turn to the left, and therefore that their interests were in jeopardy. We underestimated the conservatism of the Honduran political class and the military leadership."<sup>14</sup>

So here in 2009, the 55th year of Washington's effort to strengthen the Honduran military coincided with the military putting the brakes on change.

The verb "coincided" is used because that much is indisputable—it was the 55th year and there was a coup. Did US military aid cause the coup? Certainly not directly, but would the Honduran military have acted as it did without decades of grooming by the United States? No one can say. Searching for evidence of a US colonel holding a smoking gun is not the same as sinking analytic teeth into the maddeningly vague mentality that accompanied

those decades of providing military hardware and especially training, and of embedding US officers in Latin Americans' armed forces.

One thing is certain: of the hundreds of competent scholars who have studied the US relationship with the Latin American military over several generations, not one of them has uncovered a reason to disagree with Hans Morgenthau, the voice of hard-core Cold War realism: "Military aid is bound to have an impact upon the distribution of political power within the receiving country."<sup>15</sup>

In any event, here we are, a decade after the coup, with the UN's World Income Inequality Database indicating that Honduras now has the most unequal distribution of income in Latin America. Promote order by strengthening the right kind of state capacity and there is no need for progress.

## Belief 2: Incrementalism

Now add to this pursuit of order the boomers' second belief about development assistance: *incremental change is more desirable than radical change.*

In their Vietnam years a substantial number of young boomers favored radical slogans like "All Power to the People," and "Up Against the Wall, Mother F\*\*\*ers," but many were attracted to Washington after the US withdrawal from Southeast Asia. There they were inducted into a culture that makes headlines out of absolutist slogans but prizes incremental change. Like their predecessors, we boomers learned to accept half a loaf, to compromise. Take Ted Yoho, a member of the ultraconservative Freedom Caucus of the House of Representatives: "My whole impetus in running for Congress in the first place was to get rid of foreign aid. It was my thing. But if we reformulate and modernize it, yeah, I have no problem with that. There are people who want to do this for humanitarian aid, fine. There are people like me who want to do this for national security, like me, fine."<sup>16</sup>

Charles Lindblom's term for negotiating such compromises was "muddling through," and it has always been considered a strength of the US

political system. In democracies, Lindblom argued, "policy does not move in leaps and bounds, [and] a wise policy-maker consequently expected that his policies will achieve only part of what he hopes, and at the same time will produce unanticipated consequences he would have preferred to avoid. If he proceeds through a *succession* of incremental changes, he avoids serious lasting mistakes."<sup>17</sup> As this suggests, muddling through means that the United States rarely reaches closure on any controversial issue, and when Washington manages to reach what appears to be closure, the debate is reopened almost immediately.

So there is only part of a border wall. It is being built incrementally and may never be finished. Should it be completed, a debate will begin about whether it should be torn down.

This commitment to incrementalism guides development assistance. After skimming off their administrative costs—probably a quarter and perhaps more of the \$180 million—the US government's various uplifting institutions divide up what remains into thousands of little pieces based on that ten-verb paragraph. In 2016, for example, the nominally independent but government-funded (99.1 percent in 2018) National Endowment for Democracy (NED), after skimming off its share for administration, granted \$575,000 to a nominally independent National Democratic Institute (NDI), which skimmed off its share and spent the rest to fund "a small office in Tegucigalpa to provide technical assistance to support all the political parties represented in the Congress on transparency and political participation issues."<sup>18</sup>

The NED currently has seven additional projects in Honduras—\$40,000 for the Jóvenes Contra la Violencia Honduras to "empower youth leaders to become 'Ambassadors for Violence Prevention' and develop localized campaigns promoting prevention."<sup>19</sup> A \$200,000,000 AID contract with Creative Associates International to operate "Outreach Centers" may seem large in comparison, but first Creative Associates skims off its administrative costs, then splits what is left among four Central American countries, where it is filtered to dozens of individuals centers—nearly fifty in Honduras.

Although it writes checks for larger amounts, AID is following the lead of the US government's Inter-American Foundation (IAF), which since its creation in 1969 has become the gold standard for incrementalism. It currently has 35 active projects worth \$11.3 million in Honduras. One recent grant of \$50,000 to the Centro Integral Misión de Amor is "to improve the quality of life and integration of youth with disabilities by improving their technical skills, raising public awareness through a campaign about the rights of people with disabilities (PWD), and providing sign language training. The project will benefit 90 people and 260 indirectly."<sup>20</sup>

The belief underlying all this is that if the United States funds enough such projects among enough such recipients, it will enable Hondurans to muddle through from "underdeveloped" to "not so underdeveloped." And that will be the end of migrant caravans.

Progressive boomers often conduct evaluations to determine if they are being successful, and generally find that project X or approach Y is making progress.<sup>21</sup> They can be excused for not evaluating whether their belief in order-focused incrementalism is holding back progress, since no one knows how to conduct such an assessment. That said, it seems strange that the same boomers who applauded what President Obama said about the Cuba embargo—"When what you're doing doesn't work for fifty years, it's time to try something new"<sup>22</sup>—these same boomers appear to have never thought of applying that thinking to evaluating not what they are doing today or the day before yesterday, but what the United States has been doing for more than half a century.

### Enter the Traditionalists

Were progressives to apply that thinking to a mega-evaluation and conclude that it was time for the United States to end its effort to improve Central Americans, the traditionalists would block their exit.

In the five years from FY 1994 through FY 1998, which eliminates causal factors that would motivate traditionalists—Cold War anticommunism, drug trafficking, migrant caravans, and the like—in those five years when traditionalists were

uninterested, Hondurans received an average of about \$26 million per year in all types of US assistance, economic and military.<sup>23</sup> Then Honduras became a stop along the drug-trafficking highway between producers and consumers, which the United States had a perfectly legitimate interest in closing. And this trafficking was accompanied by a set of pathologies that encourage emigration, which, given the migrants' choice of countries, the United States also has a right to control.

Soon the budget began to grow, from \$26 million in 1994-1998 to \$180 million in 2017.

Progressives never could have engineered this alone. The fact that assistance increased sixfold indicates that Washington's realists now believe the United States has an interest in becoming involved in Central Americans' development, an interest it did not have in the mid-1990s.

This was nothing new. Like today's traditionalists, realists have always believed that today's development assistance is a useful weapon in the foreign policy arsenal. As Cold War realist Hans Morgenthau argued decades ago: "Foreign aid is no different from diplomatic or military policy or propaganda. They are all weapons." More recently, in 2010, the Obama administration made this type of soft power one of the "3Ds" of national security: "Development, diplomacy and defense mutually reinforce one another in an integrated comprehensive approach to national security." And so, as AID's chief executive said last November: "Our job is to be a vibrant tool in the toolbox of American foreign policy. Foreign assistance must always serve American interests."<sup>24</sup>

Yes, today's traditionalists believe it will take too long for development assistance to have any impact on Central Americans' decisions to emigrate, but this assistance is useful as a lever—as both a carrot and a stick.

Traditionalists find strengthening state capacity to be especially attractive. It means empowering many recipients who generally oppose dramatic change. Every society has its share of civilians who favor the status quo or, if pushed to do something, believe order-based incrementalism is the best

option. These recipients cooperate because they hold the same beliefs as Washington's boomers. And each receives some carrots—a piece of the \$180 million.

And once these recipients come to depend on development assistance, as anyone might after half a century, traditionalists now have the ability to wield their soft-power stick: a threat to stop the assistance. That is what the Trump administration is now doing, and it probably will succeed. The sledgehammer-subtle message from the White House to Honduras's military and police: the money will stop flowing until you stop your citizens from crossing the border into Guatemala. That country's assistance has also been suspended, so now it is in Guatemala's interest to stop both its own citizens and the Hondurans who manage to slip through.

As for Mexico, it is unclear why the White House recently threatened to increase tariffs instead of withholding the \$79 million in development assistance proposed for FY 2019.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps tariffs are a more effective way to tell Mexicans that the United States is serious about stopping migrants before they reach the US border.

Whatever the case, no one can look at the recent aid cutoff and not see that development assistance is being used as an instrument of power. It encourages recipients to do what Washington wants them to do.

### The Future?

The longer you study this traditionalist-progressive alliance, the more impressive it seems. Here are two quite different groups of boomers tuned to a common key, a harmonious symphony of assistance performed by an elaborate ensemble of permanent uplifting institutions—an entire industry with tens of thousands of individual players who, like those Honduran recipients, profit personally from the continuous search for one more verb to cram into a three-sentence paragraph that already has ten.

There is no reason to believe that the United States will change its approach to Latin Americans' development so long as the current boomer

coalition is in charge, and so far there is no evidence that its successor Generation X, some of whom are now in their fifties, hold beliefs that differ from the boomers. After all, we progressive boomers also inherited our beliefs about development assistance—"good governance" is today's term for what Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson promoted a century ago—so why should we expect Generation X to do anything other than accept what progressive boomers are currently dropping into their lap—order-based incrementalism?

And on the migration issue there is no logical reason for Gen X traditionalists to withdraw from their alliance with the progressives—to voluntarily give up a useful foreign policy tool.

But who can resist wondering what could happen if the following US generation—the millennials—stopped trying to improve Latin Americans. For that to happen the millennials will have to look closely at what has occurred while we boomers have been in charge. Should they find insufficient time to examine this generation's effort, here is the *Cliff's Notes* summary of an Everest-high mountain of research by hundreds of researchers: from Nicaragua to El Salvador to Guatemala and to Honduras, we baby boomers, following in the footsteps of our predecessors, have *on balance* done more harm than good in Central America.

As with climate change, these researchers will tell you it is no longer a matter of reasonable people disagreeing. It is a matter of fact, and the fact is that the more Washington helps, the worse Central America becomes. You can point out the difference between covariation and causality for only so long; after so many decades of covariation, it is time to accept some level of causality, some level of responsibility.

If the millennials understood what Graham Greene understood about the Quiet American and therefore stopped trying to improve Central Americans, the sledding would almost certainly be rough. Washington would be abandoning a significant number of significant people, and one reason today's aid recipients are significant is that they have been sharing the development assistance pie, including the military and police who anchor

the state's capacity. For that to stop would be to reduce the clout of groups that favor the status quo or order-based incremental change.

No one can say how a US withdrawal would play out—how these recipients and their local adversaries would react—but we know that the redistribution of political power is prone to disorder. In the worst of outcomes there would be the horror of dirty wars, which is not an option anyone should endorse. In the best of outcomes Central Americans would conduct something like Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution, which is an outcome most progressive boomers would vigorously applaud.

About this future we can only hypothesize, always with an awareness that Washington's pessimists are going to foresee gang-sponsored mayhem without today's protectorate. Meanwhile, optimists will hope for a day when Central Americans, having declared their independence from Washington's uplifters, are free to solve their own problems in their own way—free, as the first generation of US citizens wrote in their Fourth of July declaration, to select their principles and organize their powers as to them seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.

## Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> "Common Sense on the Caravan," *New York Times*, November 4, 2018; "Build Central America, Not a Wall," *New York Times*, February 25, 2019.
- <sup>2</sup> "Development assistance" is today's more precise term for yesterday's omnibus "foreign aid." This effort to help other peoples "develop" should not be confused with relief from famines or recovery from earthquakes, civil wars, and the like. Obviously there can be some overlap, but nothing that follows is about what is commonly known as *humanitarian* assistance; *development* assistance aims to make others less underdeveloped.
- <sup>3</sup> Delazon Smith to Secretary of State John Calhoun, August 10, 1845, Communications from Special Agents, vol. 13, Special Agents, vol. 13, Record Group (RG) 59, Microfilm Set (M) 37, Reel (R) 6, National Archives (NA); William Hunter to Secretary of State John Forsyth, August 12, 1839, Despatches from Brazil, vol. 11, no. 96, NA M121, R13; John Randolph Clay to Secretary of State Daniel Webster, June 8, 1852, in *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States Inter-American Affairs, 1831-1860*, ed. William R. Manning (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1932-1939), vol. 6, 290n; William Churchwell, Special Agent of the United States to Mexico to Secretary of State Lewis Cass, February 8, 1859, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States*, vol. 9, 1027.
- <sup>4</sup> Senator Carl Schurz's speeches, January 11, 1871, and March 28-29, 1871, reprinted in *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Charles Schurz*, ed. Frederic Bancroft, 6 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), vol. 2, pp. 71-122 and 177-252.
- <sup>5</sup> Philander Knox to Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, May 24, 1911, in *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*, 1912, p. 593; Assistant Secretary Francis Huntington Wilson to newspaper editor William Hoster, June 24, 1911, Wilson Papers, Ursinus College. For the same assessment three years later ("there is no hope of improvement and every prospect of worse conditions unless the country is afforded decided help from without"), see Memo, Boaz Long, February 10, 1914, 814.77/259, RG 59, NA.
- <sup>6</sup> Senator Joseph McCarthy, speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, February 9, 1950, reprinted along with McCarthy's commentary in *Congressional Record*, February 20, 1950, pp. 1952-1981, quotation p. 1954.
- <sup>7</sup> Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, "Latin America - Current Stage of Progress in Key Socio-Economic Reforms, by Country," Research Memorandum RAR-4, September 4, 1961, NSF Regional Security, Box 215A, Folder "Latin America General 9/61-12/62," JFK Library.
- <sup>8</sup> "US Foreign Aid by Country: Honduras" (2017), USAID, <https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/HND> (accessed April 10, 2019).
- <sup>9</sup> "About Honduras," <https://www.usaid.gov/honduras>. The verbs in this paragraph have been underlined for ease of reading.
- <sup>10</sup> "Country Roadmaps," USAID, <https://selfreliance.usaid.gov/>.
- <sup>11</sup> *Amnesty International Report 2015/16*, <https://www.amnestyusa.org/files/pol1025522016english.pdf>; "Honduras: Events of 2018," *Human Rights Watch World Report, 2019*, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/honduras>; Azam Ahmed, "Either They Kill Us or We Kill Them," *New York Times*, May 5, 2019; Sonia Nazario, "Someone Is Always Trying to Kill You," *New York Times*, April 5, 2019.
- <sup>12</sup> The search for a catchy acronym determined an uncommonly awkward title: Tropa de Inteligencia y Grupos de Respuesta Especial de Seguridad.
- <sup>13</sup> "Honduras: Events of 2018," *Human Rights Watch World Report, 2019*.
- <sup>14</sup> Victor Meza, former Minister of the Interior, in "Honduran Coup Shows Business Elite Still in Charge," *New York Times*, August 6, 2009.
- <sup>15</sup> Hans Morgenthau, "A Political Theory of Foreign Aid," *American Political Science Review* 56, no. 2 (June 1962): 308.
- <sup>16</sup> Glen Thrush, "Trump Embraces Foreign Aid to Counter China's Global Influence," *New York Times*, October 14, 2018. Named one of "Eight Tea Party Morons Destroying America" by *Rolling Stone*, and one of *GQ's* "America's 20 Craziest Politicians," Yoho was referring to a proposal to consolidate the government's development finance tools, such as the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the Development Credit Authority (DCA) of USAID, into a new Development Finance Institution.
- <sup>17</sup> Charles E. Lindblom, "The Science of 'Muddling Through,'" *Public Administration Review* 19 (Spring 1959): 79-88, quotations at 84, 86.

- <sup>18</sup> Email communication from the NDI's Latin America specialist, James Swigert, August 23, 2017. For this project the NED gave the NDI \$475,000 in 2018. For another example, this one a spreadsheet with a stunning 25,814 rows, each about a "commitment" or a "disbursement," see AID's spreadsheet of projects between 2011 and 2017: first go to <https://foreignassistance.gov/#/search>, then type in "Honduras" and click on "Download All Honduras Data" (accessed June 9, 2019).
- <sup>19</sup> "Honduras 2018," National Endowment for Democracy, <https://www.ned.org/region/latin-america-and-caribbean/honduras-2018/>.
- <sup>20</sup> "Centro Integral Misión de Amor, Public Statement 2017," <https://archive.iaf.gov/our-work/where-we-work/country-portfolios/honduras/2016-cima.html>.
- <sup>21</sup> On this see Lars Schoultz, *In Their Own Best Interests: A History of the U.S. Effort to Improve Latin Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 295–297.
- <sup>22</sup> Statement by the President on Cuba Policy Changes, December 17, 2014.
- <sup>23</sup> "U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants: Obligations and Loan Authorizations, July 1, 1945–September 30, 2017," USAID, <https://explorer.usaid.gov/reports.html> (October 4, 2017): \$35,819,268 (1994), \$23,028,000 (1995), \$21,208,200 (1996), \$29,548,000 (1997), \$23,411,204 (1998), or a total of \$133,014,672 divided by 5 = \$26,602,934. Hurricane Mitch devastated Honduras in October 1998, just as the 1999 fiscal year was beginning, and humanitarian relief (not development assistance) increased substantially during FY 1999 and FY 2000.
- <sup>24</sup> Morgenthau, "A Political Theory of Foreign Aid," 309; President of the United States, *National Security Strategy*, May 2010; the quotation is from the State Department's press statement unveiling of this new strategy document. USAID administrator Mark Green quoted in Edward Wong, "U.S. Continues Giving Aid to Central America and to Millions of Venezuelan Refugees," *New York Times*, November 3, 2018. (Green's comment at the very end of the article was not included in every *NYT* edition.)
- <sup>25</sup> "U.S. Foreign Aid by Country: Guatemala," USAID, [https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/GTM?measure=Obligations&fiscal\\_year=2017&implementing\\_agency\\_id=7](https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/GTM?measure=Obligations&fiscal_year=2017&implementing_agency_id=7); "Foreign Assistance in Mexico," [foreignassistance.gov](https://foreignassistance.gov), <https://www.foreignassistance.gov/explore/country/Mexico>. //