
Defense Report

AUSA



U.S. Policy in Latin American—The Quest for Freedom Continues

Today, more than 90 percent of Latin America's population lives under democratic governments, compared with only one-third less than six years ago. In support of this dynamic process, the United States in the last four years has provided strong moral, political, and economic backing—more than three of every four dollars sent to Latin nations have been for economic help, while less than one dollar went for military assistance.

Conversely, the Soviet Union and Cuba are actively promoting communist revolution in every country in Central America except Costa Rica, and in the mainland Colombia as well. Soviet military aid to Cuba and Nicaragua since 1979 has been greater than U.S. military aid to all of Latin America in that period. The threats resulting from this factor are as much a part of the region's crisis as are better known and understood indigenous and historic factors.

Thus, it would seem that all Americans could fully support U.S. policy in the area which is based on four mutually supportive and simultaneously pursued elements:

- To assist in the development of democratic institutions and to encourage creation of representative governments accountable to their citizens.

- To address on an urgent basis the economic and social problems of the region by providing economic assistance to stimulate growth, create opportunity, and improve the quality of life of the people.

- To provide security assistance to enable the people to defend themselves against Soviet-bloc, Cuban, and Nicaraguan supported insurgents and terrorists intent on establishing Marxist-Leninist dictatorships.

- To provide peaceful solutions through negotiation and dialogue among the countries of the region and among political groups within each country.

This statement is a comprehensive, forthright acknowledgement that the urge to democracy in Latin America deserves our full support. The time to cement North-South relationships in this hemisphere has long since passed. To achieve a steady, helpful, long-term relationship requires, among other things, a more cohesive approach on the part of the American people and the U.S. government.