Latin America, Hal Brands tells us, has been twice the Cold War’s victim. Much Latin American blood was spilled during the Cold War itself, frequently in internecine wars that make the adjective “civil” inappropriate. But with the passage of time, Brands suggests, Latin America has become a victim of historical condescension too. Denuded of agency, Latin Americans have become Cold War innocents, buffeted by interventions for which the United States was largely responsible. Apart from the military officers, reactionaries, and “master architects of evil” who aligned themselves with Washington’s Cold War agenda, Latin Americans, for too many historians, played bit parts in their own tragedy (126). To correct this bias in the historiography, as he characterizes it, is among Hal Brands’s central purposes. By rebalancing our understanding of agency and by revealing the complexity of causation, Brands proposes to rescue Latin America’s Cold War from the genre of morality tale and to enrich our understanding. This is a tall task, and it is a measure of his accomplishment that he substantially succeeds.

Hal Brands has, in my view, written a most impressive book. Latin America’s Cold War is not without its shortcomings, but these are in many cases the limits of the historiographical genre – international history – within which he works. I imagine that some historians who focus on the national histories that Brands engages may find points of disagreement in his handling of particular episodes, crises, and personalities. Not being a specialist, I will not engage Brands on these grounds. I will instead consider some of the methodological issues that the book raises and its implications for Cold War historiography and the international history of the twentieth century more broadly construed.

First off, the methodological issues. Brands approaches Latin America as an international historian working in breadth. Even by the standards of the field,
his gaze is remarkably panoramic. But we should not assume that Brands has merely synthesized his interpretation from the available historical literature. Far from it, his challenge to the historiography is based upon archival research in a number of sites, from Washington to Buenos Aires. But in a book of some 260 pages, compromises between general reach and particular focus have had to be made, and Brands has had to devise strategies to mitigate the trade-off. His approach works something like this: having sketched out an interpretative framework, Brands narrows his focus and shortens his optical lens so as to emphasize particular episodes that illustrate the major currents of Latin America’s Cold War as he sees them.

In the early 1970s, for example, Brands lingers on the Southern Cone. While he acknowledges the national variations, Argentina’s ideological polarization and political slaughter exemplify the havoc that the Cold War wrought. In the 1980s, the focus shifts to Central America and the sanguinary histories of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. For sure, Brands works to balance his shifting focus with countervailing examples and cases. His final chapter, for example, juxtaposes the transition to democracy and free markets in the Southern Cone in the 1980s with the Central American maelstrom on which the previous chapter dwells. But might an alternative selection of cases have sustained a different interpretation of Latin America’s postwar international history? Brazil and Mexico, large and significant countries that experienced somewhat less bloodshed, merit fewer mentions (seventy-three apiece) than Guatemala (eighty) and Argentina (a hundred). This raises questions. Had the book’s selection of cases represented Latin America’s distribution of population or GDP, would the overarching argument have been any different?

This leads into a related issue, which is the utility of “Latin America” as a “unit for historical analysis” (162). National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski lamented in 1977 that United States policy had for too long treated a diverse and complex arena as a homogeneous entity. To emphasize “bilateral” relations rather than a one-size-fits-all “regional” policy would make for better diplomacy, Brzezinski suggested. Might the same be true for historiography? For sure, Brands recognizes the region’s diversity; at points, his argument depends upon it. What Brands calls the Latin American “challenge” to US hegemony during the 1970s foundered in large part because Latin American nation-states had quite different priorities and agendas. But the bottom line, for Brands, is that Latin America retains genuine utility as a

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2 Minutes of Cabinet Meeting, 28 March 1977, Files of the Council of Economic Advisers, Subject File, Box 8, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, Atlanta, Georgia.
historical category. Yet this is more asserted than explained, and there are points at which the synthetic approach struggles to convince.

We learn, for example, that the oil crisis of 1973–74 empowered Latin American exporters vis-à-vis the United States (133). A few pages later, however, Brands writes that high energy prices were “a disaster for most Latin American countries” (152). Clearly there are distinctions to be made between countries that were net exporters of oil and those that were not. Brands, in his text, makes them. Yet the point still illustrates the challenges that a regional approach faces. Are global economic circumstances the most useful way to explain the rise and fall of Latin America’s diplomatic challenge when countries’ experiences of global economic circumstances were so very different?

If we acknowledge national diversity, on what grounds might the case for a regional approach still be made? Absent the economic and political integration that would justify treating Latin America as an entity (as we do Western Europe), on what organic grounds can the case for categorical coherence be made? Some combination of language, culture, history, and ideology would presumably suffice, even if the possibility of exceptions lingers. Regardless, Brzezinski’s 1977 insight deserves a serious answer, and Brands might have engaged the unit-of-analysis conundrum more forcefully than he does.

These are methodological quibbles that most scholars working on large and ambitious international topics will have to face. In all likelihood, there are no easy answers. Put simply, trade-offs have to be made between breadth of vision and specificity of analysis. Material constraints, namely the form of the book and the patience of readers, make the choices between them something of a zero-sum game.

By raising questions about focus and framework, I do not mean to suggest that Brands should have handled these issues better. For my own part, I think that he strikes a fair balance. Other readers may disagree, and the issues bear reflection regardless. The practitioners of big, integrative international history surely need to hold themselves accountable to the specialists who have spent decades working upon national cases that the former encompass in pages. Whether Latin America’s Cold War passes this test will be for others to judge. On the other hand, there should be real value to the historical macroscope. Turning to some of the substantive issues that Brands engages, we will see how his interpretation enhances our knowledge and understanding of Latin America’s Cold War.

If a single word could distill Brands’s interpretative agenda it might well be “complexity.” Unwilling to offer singular explanations, Brands instead favors interlocking hypotheses. To understand Latin America’s tumult in the era of the global Cold War, he argues, we need to contemplate the region’s deep internal history – its legacies of social and economic inequality and thwarted political reform – as well as the more proximate failures of Latin American
polities. We must at the same time take an international perspective but one that encompasses the ideological challenge of Third Worldism and the involvement of Eastern bloc actors as well as the familiar meddling of the United States. A field of historical vision thus expanded, Brands suggests, will reveal Latin America’s Cold War to have been a conflict rather more nuanced and more complex than the one-dimensional approaches that emphasize US interventionism usually suggest it to have been.

This emphasis on complexity seems persuasive on its own terms. It has particular implications for Brands’s theorization of the United States as an agent in Latin American affairs. This, of course, is where Brands most directly challenges the historiographical orthodoxies. The United States, Brands explains, has often struggled to influence Latin American outcomes; a litany of partial and abortive interventions here amounts more to a chronicle of half-measures than to a legacy of imperialism. Policymakers in Washington, Brands explains, have usually understood the limits of their own capacities to shape Latin American outcomes. When they have overreached in their ambition, as Kennedy did in his Alliance for Progress, outcomes disabused them of their pretensions to effect change.

This argument has unavoidable normative implications insofar as it diminishes the causal (if not necessarily the moral) responsibility of the United States for atrocities, as in El Salvador, where United States influence was for Brands a conditioning variable rather than an overriding one. This will raise some hackles. Some readers may also object that Brands defines United States power in terms that privilege the US government and downplay the roles of nongovernmental actors, whether economic interests (as in Guatemala in 1954) or, more positively, human rights activists (as in Argentina in the 1970s). This is a concern, but to have restored some perspective to our sense of the US government’s ability to determine outcomes is one of Brands’s important accomplishments in Latin America’s Cold War.

If Brands downplays the capacity of the United States government to shape events, he upgrades the historical influence of Eastern bloc actors. This helps us to situate Latin America’s late twentieth-century turmoil within a global Cold War context as opposed to a narrower framework of US interventionism stretching back to the Monroe Doctrine. Soviet influence, as Brands explains it, was variable rather than constant, and Moscow exhibited restraint as well as adventurism. During the early 1970s, for example, Soviet decision-makers resisted the temptation to get involved in the Southern Cone by providing direct assistance to the Allende regime in Chile. But in Central America in the early 1980s, Brands argues, Soviet leaders would be less restrained, embracing the Nicaraguan revolution as an opportunity to assault the “underbelly” of United States power – much, it should be said, as the United States was doing to the Soviet Union in Afghanistan at the same time (196).
If the Soviet Union exhibited both restraint and revolutionary zeal, Fidel Castro’s Cuba was more consistent in its enthusiasm for action. Full accounting of Cuba’s involvement with the Latin American continent will await the opening of the Cuban archives to general researchers. Nonetheless, Brands’s argument aligns with scholars, notably Piero Gleijeses, who have worked in Cuban archives and who have characterized Castro’s regime as activist, ideological, and adventurist in the world. At the very least, the evidence that Brands marshals demonstrates that conservative regimes in Latin America genuinely believed revolutionary communism to be a mortal threat.

Between the Cuban revolution of 1959 and the late 1980s, the fear of revolutionary destabilization, Brands concludes, was quite real; it was not just an ugly pretext that right-wing caudillos used to discredit (and murder) social progressives. If anyone has been nailing ideological masks on Latin American actors, Brands suggests, it is those well-intentioned Westerners who have downplayed the radicalism of the far left. Here the Carter administration’s response to the Nicaraguan revolution seems prototypical. US officials called the Sandinista revolutionaries moderates and hoped, in vain, that they would live up to the appellation. Brands, in contrast, does not pull his punches.

By drawing our attention to the realities of political polarization as well as to the limits of US power and the reach of Eastern bloc influence, Brands nuances our understanding of Latin America’s Cold War. Given the scale of his accomplishment, it feels mean-spirited to ask what more he might have done. But let’s do so, at least as a thought experiment. Whereas other historians have in recent years questioned the utility of “the Cold War” as a metanarrative for explaining postwar international history, Brands inhabits a Cold War framework and improves it. But what utility might alternative historical paradigms have for explaining Latin America’s international history since the Second World War? The question, alas, goes mostly unasked.

Brands, to take one important example, acknowledges the historical shift that the waning of statist political-economic orthodoxies and the opening to global markets from the late 1970s represented. But he subsumes the development within a Cold War framework and downplays the structural developments that might help us to understand it. We encounter “neoliberalism” as a set of policy proscriptions (of which Brands is rather critical), but we read little about “globalization” as a transformative historical

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process in which Latin America might have been embroiled. Could the history of Latin America’s late twentieth century be told as the story of globalization’s faltering advance (subsequent to a decades-long effort to escape it) rather than as the story of Cold War polarization that Brands favors?

It would, of course, be difficult to avoid the conclusion that for Guatemalans and Salvadoreans the Cold War was overriding, overwhelming, and devastating. But if we reflect, by contrast, on Brazil, with its booming export economy and all the social tumult that has accompanied its rise as a global player, it may be harder to conclude that the Cold War was the overriding international saga of the postwar era. As compelling as Brands’s account of Latin America’s Cold War is, it may be that the challenge of relating it to themes beyond Cold War history – from the march of economic globalization to the rise of human rights – still awaits.

*DANIEL SARGENT
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For those seeking a comprehensive history of the “Cold War” in Latin America, they appear to need look no further than the book under review. The lucid and concise summaries of various issues – such as that tiresome and ultimately unproductive debate about the underdevelopment of Latin America – are excellent. Chapter 1, for that reason alone, is to be recommended to the novice. Moreover, the bibliography of secondary sources alone constitutes an invaluable tool, though they have to be exhumed piece by piece from the publisher’s graveyard of endnotes.

Here serious doubts emerge that have troubled me since first reading the book. Perhaps only the specialist will really spot the problems. In terms of style, the author has self-consciously chosen the sanitized language of diplomacy somewhat devoid of any local colour yet lacking the punch of an INR analysis. Evidently in search of an artificial objectivity, so concerned is the author to skirt controversy, that memoirs are almost entirely ignored, particularly where rich, as in respect of Cuba. As a result context is missing. To the foreigner what most strikes one on first travelling in the continent is the prevalent culture and its importance. Yet it is entirely absent from this work. Who, from this, would guess that Chile would send a prominent writer as ambassador to Cuba or that a key instrument in Cuba’s covert war with the United States was its appeal to Gabriel García Marques and others of similar provenance? We are instead left with a beige palette or, at most, Latin America in shades of grey, looming out of a Seattle mist rather than etched against an azure Californian sky.

Furthermore, all the pre-history is missing. Surely this is relevant in that from one angle the Cold War in Latin America is simply the continuation of a
struggle against US hegemony in other form. That hegemony need not be a product of intentionality, as the author appears to assume, but the product of circumstances: unequal trading relations between a leading manufacturing power and producers of primary commodities, and unavoidable determinants of normal geopolitics. It begs the crucial question: was there really a Cold War in Latin America other than the US conflict with Cuba? Does Brands really believe that any truly radical socialist government would have been allowed the freedom to achieve its ends, for good or ill (a Chilean choice), under US hegemony, regardless of the Cold War between East and West? The pre-history suggests not.

The endless succession of US military interventions in the Caribbean to sustain US business interests are thus nowhere to be found, nor the bitter struggle over the dismemberment of Mexico for the enlargement of the United States. One is reminded of the Mafalda cartoon, where she is asked to write an essay on economic sovereignty and, wandering through Buenos Aires amidst a mass of signs for Coca Cola and every other lead American product, she cannot come up with any ideas. Is this the Mafalda version of history? Even in relation to Cuba this is a pertinent question. For in a real sense the Americans by their policies were largely responsible for drawing the Russians in because of Cuban maltreatment of US economic interests (something Castro warned Allende against). Was Eisenhower’s objection to Castro not as much the latter’s virulently anti-American nationalism as anything to do with communism? The multifarious activities of US intelligence agencies are thus marginalized to a point where one wonders what the author is trying to achieve by this. It cannot have escaped his notice that where elections were held, as in Italy, they almost always involved the United States as the biggest, albeit hidden, voter, loaded with cash and influence through the press.

Jonathan Haslam

Corpus Christi College, Cambridge

Historians of US relations with Latin America have been waiting for such a book: a sweeping, geographically ambitious account of the Cold War era in the region, drawing on a broad reading of the literature, leavened by original research in the archives of multiple countries. The text is completely free of academic jargon. In fact, for having begun as a relatively recent dissertation, this study, focussing on high politics and economics, seems unscathed by any encounter with the cultural turn, gender theory, or recent trends emphasizing history from below. Like Odd Arne Westad, Brands understands the Cold War outside the zone where NATO jockeyed with the Warsaw Pact to have
been a series of conflicts with local origins that were exacerbated by external meddling. Latin America becomes deprovincialized in this account, as he connects the events of the region to broader global movements for decolonization, nonalignment, and Third World solidarity. The United States, rather than the wizard behind the curtain, is but one among several powers coaching from the sidelines as Latin American actors make their own way through a series of crises provoked by the dueling extremes of left and right.

The challenge in writing a book that decenters the United States from an account of the Cold War in Latin America and takes an evenhanded view of political extremes is a substantial one: how does one write about a region in which US power is so disproportionately large – vastly outstripping that of any other state, including extrahemispheric rivals – while according Latin Americans agency over their own fates? And how can one maintain the stance of the neutral arbiter apportioning blame equally in both directions, in a part of the world where rightist violence has killed hundreds of thousands more people than has leftist violence? The answer is that at its best, this book presents judicious analyses of complex events woven into a coherent whole. Where it fails, it falls into the bias of balance.

The concept behind the book is that local conflicts with local origins, determined in part by the convergence after World War II of massive population increase, inequitable land tenure, and growing political expectations, became part of the Cold War when one of three – not two – outside powers intervened: “Cuba, the United States, and the Soviet Union competed fiercely to manage or exploit this turmoil and guide the evolution of Latin American society” (3). In line with Piero Gleijeses’s excellent work, Brands rightfully gives prominence to Cuba’s own foreign policy, a welcome corrective to accounts of the Cold War that see the island primarily as a tropical backdrop for a contest of wills between John F. Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev.

There is an elegance to the equilibrium in this structure: the United States, the Soviet Union, and Cuba each sought to impose their will upon Latin America, and each failed because its ideology was unsuited to the region’s complexities. At the same time, the book retains a laudable emphasis on Latin American agency. Brands’s account of the Sandinista revolution and its aftermath includes attention to regional actors such as Mexico, Cuba, Costa Rica, and Argentina, as well as numerous internal groupings. Where other scholars have emphasized the influence of US and French training on Latin

6 Gleijeses.
American counterinsurgency styles, Brands points out that Brazilian and Guatemalan military officers needed no encouragement to see communist subversion as an existential threat. Cuba trained upwards of a thousand Latin American guerrillas per year in the early 1960s; in 1980 Cuba trained several hundred Salvadorean insurgents for the FMLN’s “final offensive,” equipping them with guns and mortars. This compared to the 29,000 Salvadorean military personnel who received US training, along with half a billion dollars in military aid to the government. The discrepancy in scale may not speak to intentionality, but it does speak to capacity, and therefore to causality. For this reason the three-legged stool on which the overall argument rests can be rocky, because the US presence in the region was enormous in scope, scale, and duration, while the Soviet presence was narrowly focussed and relatively brief, and Cuba’s major ambitions were never matched by its modest resources.

Brands’s conclusions are partly the result of a periodization that begins with the Cuban Revolution. A more capacious conceptualization of Latin America’s Cold War might go as far back as 1917, to the consolidation of the Mexican revolution and the beginning of Moscow-backed international communist movements. Rightist military governments were busily crushing nationalist and left-wing social movements throughout the Caribbean and Central America in the 1920s and early 1930s, drawing on US financial and military support at a time when the Soviet presence in Latin America was negligible and Fidel Castro had yet to grow a beard. The Cold War had certainly reached Latin America by 1954, when the CIA-sponsored coup against Jacobo Árbenz of Guatemala toppled a government that pre-dated the Cuban revolution, had come to power through free elections, and received no Soviet support until coup preparations were well under way.

Brands winds up faulting the Soviets for stirring up insurgencies that caused military repression, and discredits critics who have blamed US initiatives for fueling the growth of the national security state in Latin America. “[I]f scholars seek to identify a foreign impetus for military extremism,” Brands claims, “they would do better to interrogate the ramifications of East-bloc initiatives” (261). Yet the projects of intelligence-service modernization and the politicization of the military under the Public Safety Program and Military Assistance Program were initiated during the Eisenhower administration, which was pouring $100 million a year into Latin American armed forces before the Soviets took any real notice of the region. Training at the International Police Academy in Washington and military sites in the Canal Zone and the United States helped reinforce the inclinations of area security forces to see political activity as subversive activity, and their primary role as suppressing the domestic left. Of course, the largest Cold War-era military intervention by the United States in Latin America, Lyndon Johnson’s
dispatch of 20,000 marines to the Dominican Republic to prevent the restoration of a leftist constitutional government to power, was an event in which the Soviet Union played no role whatsoever, and Cuba’s role was limited to being Johnson’s bogeyman.

One of the most original contributions in this volume is the chapter making sense of the 1970s that identifies a “Latin American Diplomatic Challenge” to US predominance (129). Brands argues that changes in the international system, especially a perceived decline in US power after Vietnam, Watergate, détente, the oil shock, and the collapse of the Bretton Woods currency system, created a fluid situation in which some Latin American leaders sought to diversify their trading partners, engage in regional accords, and generally shake off US influence. Leaders in a number of Latin American countries saw an opportunity to increase their domestic legitimacy through nationalistic stands. The result was a failed challenge, because other great powers were not willing to usurp the traditional US role, because rising oil prices hurt most Latin American economies, and because Washington did not relinquish its custom of intervening to undermine its opponents in the region.

Brands sees the 1970s violence in the Southern Cone as a prominent example of one of his main themes, that “extremism begat extremism” (97). This is a version of the dos demonios ("two demons") theory popularized by neoliberal Argentine governments, who explained the Dirty War as the product of left-wing violence provoking right-wing repression. This notion is belied throughout the hemisphere by the extraordinary imbalance in the number of victims of left and right, according to United Nations and other investigations: in Guatemala, whose civil war claimed some 200,000 lives, guerrillas were responsible for only three percent of wartime human rights violations, compared to ninety-three percent committed by successive military governments; in El Salvador the figures are five percent for the rebels and eighty-five percent for the state and its affiliated death squads. In Chile under Salvador Allende, fewer than a dozen members of the security forces and an ex-minister were killed by leftist groups, compared to the three thousand victims of Pinochet’s 1973 coup. Some of the nuggets Brands has brought back from the archives make this discrepancy apparent. To support his claim that “official Soviet–Chilean cooperation never amounted to much,” he notes that the Kremlin greeted Allende’s victory by raising the rent on the Chilean

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embassy in Moscow by 100 percent, and did not increase funding for Latin American communist parties beyond the low levels established in the 1960s (151).

The point is not that leftist rebels, or the Soviets, were on the side of the angels. The vast disparity in bloodletting should lead to an analytical, rather than a political, conclusion, one that rejects what Greg Grandin has called “a tautological positing of ideological radicalism as the cause of radicalization.” The very fact that, with rare exceptions like Peru’s Sendero Luminoso, rebels selectively targeted representatives of state power, whereas rightist military governments targeted broad swaths of the population, suggests that something is at work besides equivalent extremisms. In Latin America, with the highest rates of inequality in land tenure and wealth in the world, that has usually been the efforts of a wealthy landed minority to prevent champions of the poor majority from gaining political power, first by repressing their legal representatives in peasant organizations, trade unions, and political parties, and then, when electoral and judicial routes to change are closed, by going after the rebels who seek change outside the closed system, and the communities in which they live.

The book displays command of a wide range of topics and is filled with the confident characterizations one is more accustomed to see emerge from the pen of a senior scholar. After surveying the bloody record of the Southern Cone and Central America, Brands writes, “U.S. military aid certainly enabled state terror in various countries, but to hone in too narrowly on this variable as the source of such terror is to risk ignoring the importance of local circumstances” (259, original emphasis). This is undoubtedly true, and it is not a straw-man argument, since some US scholars on the left whose principal concern has been the conduct of their own government have written as if that government were the only important actor on the Latin American stage.

The most important foreign actor, nonetheless, it remains. It would take only a brief foray onto the thin ice of counterfactual history to recognize just how different Latin America’s Cold War would have looked without the United States playing its role. Remove Soviet intervention and we would still have seen the Guatemalan, Cuban, Chilean, and Nicaraguan governments of the left, all of which came to power without Soviet help. Had the United States not regularly intervened to pick winners in Latin American conflicts, however, but had instead tolerated a political spectrum with a left wing as broad as its right, more in line with, say, that common in most Western European countries, we would likely have seen plenty of fierce conflicts,

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8 Greg Grandin, “Living in Revolutionary Time: Coming to Terms with the Violence of Latin America’s Long Cold War,” in Grandin and Joseph, 10.
producing a much wider array of governments and parties and popular movements aiming to make a dent in the region’s still extraordinary levels of inequality, succeeding in some places and failing in others, offering models for imitation and models to avoid.

American University

MAX PAUL FRIEDMAN

It is certainly a pleasure to have one’s work reviewed by Professors Sargent, Friedman, and Haslam. They raise a number of important points; I will briefly address a few of them in my response.

Professor Sargent’s review has mainly to do with the issue of framing. He rightly points out that “Latin America” can be a problematic unit of analysis, that shifting the focus of the book to different countries might have produced a different interpretation, and that historians should look at the Latin American experience both within and outside the Cold War context. With respect to the first issue, this problem is simply inherent to the endeavor of large-scale, interpretive history. There is inevitably a trade-off between breadth and depth of analysis, between the granularity one aims to provide in a focussed monograph and the larger interpretive claims I hoped to advance in my book. I know no way of avoiding this problem (other than writing very, very long books); my solution, such as it was, was to weave the disunity and incoherence of “Latin America” into my telling of this larger story. My feeling was (and is) that this would mitigate the problem inherent in the undertaking. If nothing else, this effort at “lumping” should give those more inclined to “splitting” something to work with.

Regarding the second issue, it is undoubtedly true that any story changes as different aspects of that story are emphasized. A history of the Cold War in Venezuela would look much different to a history of the Cold War in Guatemala; a story that focusses on Brazil and Mexico would not look quite the same as one that focusses on Argentina and El Salvador. The challenge in this book, however, was to weave these different stories into something approximating a coherent narrative. I would argue that the book does so – the experiences of Brazil and Mexico are integrated into the analysis and the flow of the story, and both figure prominently in several chapters. It is always possible to argue that certain countries or episodes should receive more or less emphasis; the question that Professor Sargent asks is whether placing less stress on the upheavals in the Southern Cone and Central America, and more on the (relative) stability that was (sometimes) present in Brazil and Mexico, would lead to a more informative account. I tend to think it would not, but there is certainly room for disagreement on this issue.
With respect to the third issue – the role of globalization – I plead no contest. My book was meant as an interpretation of how the Cold War affected Latin America. The question of how processes like globalization affected the region is a fascinating one (and one that I do touch on in the final chapter), but it is one about which separate volumes will have to be written.

Professor Friedman also raises a number of important issues in his review. With respect to the question of periodization, I think it is somewhat misleading to say that my book begins with the Cuban revolution. The vast majority of the text indeed deals with the post-1959 period, because I judged that era to be the years of peak intensity of Latin America’s Cold War. From an interpretive perspective, however, the book makes quite clear that two of the major conflicts that came together during the post-1959 period had much deeper roots, in the history of oppression and revolt that had long plagued Latin America, and in the long-running tension between American power and Latin American nationalism. More specifically, the book also notes that the CIA-supported coup in Guatemala in 1954 was a catalyst for the political radicalism and anti-Americanism that increasingly took hold as the 1950s went on. So the pre-1959 period is not particularly emphasized in the narrative, as Professor Friedman rightly notes, but it is very much there analytically.

Professor Friedman’s review also deals at length with issues of proportion and responsibility. There is no doubt that the political right was responsible for the bulk of the violence inflicted during Latin America’s Cold War, and that the scale of US intervention significantly exceeded that of Cuban or Soviet meddling. There are various rejoinders to this point – that there were cases (such as Nicaragua in the 1980s) when Eastern bloc involvement was greater than US intervention, or that counterinsurgency is inevitably more manpower-intensive than insurgency. The key point, though, is that my argument that the various interventions and extremisms at work in the region fed on one another is not premised upon a perfect (or even a rough) numerical equivalence. Nor is it premised upon the idea that the left (or the Cubans or the Soviets) “started it.” It rests, rather, on something that seems quite clear from the history of the period – that however disproportionate they may have been, right- and left-wing extremisms did interact with one another in deadly ways, as did US and Cuban intervention. The question, in this sense, is less one of moral responsibility than one of historical causality.

I was also intrigued by Professor Friedman’s thought experiment about removing the United States from the regional equation. He is certainly right in suggesting that there were numerous cases in which doing so might have had a decisive impact – the Dominican Republic in 1965, El Salvador in 1981–82, and perhaps others as well. But we need to be careful in pursuing this thought experiment, because the outcomes are not always so clear-cut.
Would National Security Doctrine have taken root in Latin America even without American aid and encouragement? Almost certainly, I think. Would Allende’s government have been overthrown without US involvement? We can’t be sure, but my guess is that it would have happened eventually. Would conflicts in Guatemala, Argentina, and elsewhere have been less bloody? Maybe, but probably only by a matter of degree. After all, there were plenty of terrible internal conflicts in countries where US involvement was less pronounced (Colombia during *la violencia*, for instance). And what would have happened in places like Venezuela, where the United States helped solidify an imperfect democracy in the early 1960s? Or Peru, where the Carter administration, for all its struggles in the region, managed to nudge the military regime toward elections? These questions cannot be answered definitively, but they do alert us to the complexity of Professor Friedman’s counterfactual.

Then there is Professor Haslam’s review. As much as I admire Professor Haslam and his scholarship, I am not quite sure what to make of his critique. Some of his assertions strike me as dubious. The argument that the Castros and Guevara tilted toward Moscow only in response to US pressure is, at the very least, a dramatic oversimplification of what the recent scholarship tells us. And yes, American business interests did sometimes play a role in US interventions in Latin America (particularly in the early twentieth century), but as Michael Grow’s recent book (*U.S. Presidents and Latin American Interventions*) shows, these concerns were never a determining factor in Washington’s Cold War interventions in the region.9

In other cases, Professor Haslam takes me to task for not discussing this subject or that. This would be a damning critique – except that the subjects to which he refers are, in fact, discussed at some length in the book. Take the question of culture. Professor Haslam is correct that I do not use “culture” as an explicit explanatory variable, but in a broader sense culture is there nonetheless: in my discussions of anti-Americanism, the religious and cultural aspects of National Security Doctrine, and the various ideological currents that swept parts or all of Latin America during the Cold War. Or consider his assertion that “from one angle the Cold War in Latin America is simply the continuation of a struggle against US hegemony in other form.” This is a good point – or maybe it just seems like a good point to me because it sounds so much like the argument that I make at the outset of the book, at various points thereafter, and in an entire chapter devoted to anti-hegemonic elements of Latin American diplomacy.

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One final point in all of this bears restating: Latin America’s Cold War was a violent, traumatic, and often tragic experience for the region. My purpose in writing this book was to pull apart the various layers of that tragedy and thereby grapple with the complexity of the issues that contributed thereto. I hoped, in doing so, to offer a counterpoint to certain interpretations of the period, and to stimulate an energetic yet civil discussion. As many of the points raised in these reviews demonstrate, there is much to debate in my interpretation, and in the history of Latin America’s Cold War as a whole. I quite look forward to seeing how the argument unfolds.

_Sanford School of Public Policy, Duke University_  

_HAL BRANDS_