

Debating the impact of the Cold War in the Western Hemisphere

One of the basic questions worth asking about the US–Latin American relationship during the Cold War is: how did the structure of interaction in the Western Hemisphere differ from that in Eastern Europe? For accounts that discuss the level of symmetry in the two cases, see Gaddis Smith's *The Last Years of the Monroe Doctrine* (New York, 1993) or Walter LaFeber's *Inevitable Revolutions* (New York, 1983).

Although the various American covert and overt interventions have created much controversy, a more complex debate has to do with the goals and results of the Alliance for Progress initiative. While the early interpretations tended to stress the 'good intentions' behind the Alliance, later scholarship has tended to stress the lack of firm direction and the way in which it veered between at times 'conservative' and at times more 'progressive' aspects of the Alliance's intentions. The latest works exploring the Alliance for Progress in detail are Stephen Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1999) and Michael Latham, *Modernization as Ideology* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2000). The causes of Latin American resentment towards the United States, an issue that the Alliance for Progress tried to address, are also discussed in these two books.

For a fuller understanding of the United States' policy towards Latin America, it is also important to explore the prevalent 'Northern' attitude towards the 'South'. As Lars Schoultz, among others, has argued, the 'belief in Latin American inferiority is the essential core of the United States policy toward Latin America' (*Beneath the United States*, Cambridge, MA, 1998, p. xv). How far American policy towards Latin America can be explained within such a 'cultural' paradigm is, of course, open to debate. A more 'realist' version can be found in Cole Blasier, *Hovering Giant: US Responses to Revolutionary Change in Latin America* (Pittsburgh, PA, 1986).