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978-1-107-12124-9 - Latin America Confronts the United States: Asymmetry and Influence

Tom Long

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## Latin America Confronts the United States

### *Asymmetry and Influence*

*Latin America Confronts the United States* offers a new perspective on U.S.–Latin America relations. Drawing on research in six countries, the book examines how Latin American leaders are able to overcome power asymmetries to influence U.S. foreign policy. The book provides in-depth explorations of key moments in post–World War II inter-American relations – foreign economic policy before the Alliance for Progress, the negotiation of the Panama Canal Treaties, the expansion of trade through NAFTA, and the growth of counternarcotics in Plan Colombia. The new evidence challenges earlier, U.S.-centric explanations of these momentous events. Though differences in power were fundamental to each of these cases, relative weakness did not prevent Latin American leaders from aggressively pursuing their interests vis-à-vis the United States. Connecting with studies of foreign policy and international relations, the book examines how Latin American leaders achieved this influence – and why they sometimes failed.

Tom Long is Lecturer at the University of Reading (United Kingdom). He has been a visiting professor in International Relations at the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas in Mexico City and previously taught at American University's School of International Service, where he completed his Ph.D. His research focuses on dynamics of asymmetry in international relations, particularly foreign policies of Latin American states vis-à-vis the United States. His work has been published in *International Security*, *Diplomatic History*, and *Latin American Research Review* and has won prizes from the International Studies Association's Diplomatic Studies Section and the Middle Atlantic Council of Latin American Studies.

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“*Latin America Confronts the United States* is a landmark study that both helps us understand the dynamics of contemporary U.S.–Latin American relations and contributes significantly to the fields of comparative politics and international relations.

“Even though the phenomenon of Latin American countries challenging U.S. policies, behavior, and demands seems to be recent, Dr. Long’s detailed, meticulously researched study demonstrates that the conventional wisdom about compliant Latin American states mischaracterized the nature of the asymmetrical relationships since at least the 1950s. *Latin America Confronts the United States* provides a complex, nuanced, and compelling analysis that demonstrates Latin Americans have long been agents of their own history, not mere puppets of the United States.

“Based on archival research in five Latin American countries and the United States, and in-depth elite interviews with key policy makers, the study systematically elaborates four cases in which Latin American leaders were able to resist U.S. pressure and even change U.S. perceptions of a problem, thus influencing the United States to adopt new policy goals.

“Dr. Long’s clear articulation of the way this study departs from prior analyses of U.S.–Latin American relations and from prevailing conceptions about power and asymmetry in the international system enables *Latin America Confronts the United States* to serve as an instructive model of how an internationalist approach can deepen and change our understanding of global relations in a world characterized by asymmetry. Indeed, the United States has an asymmetrical relationship with most countries, because of its wealth and military capabilities. *Latin America Confronts the United States* thus offers important policy implications as well as theoretical insights.”

– Philip Brenner, Professor of International Relations and Director of the Graduate Program in U.S. Foreign Policy, American University

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*University of Reading*



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*To Robert A. Pastor*

1947–2014

*a mentor, intellectual inspiration, and an example of how to confront  
adversity with determination and good humor*

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