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Hegemonic Peace in South America: Fact or Fiction?

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Abstract

South American states have avoided a major intra-regional war since the Chaco War in 1935. Several experts characterize this development as the “hegemonic peace.” They surmise that the U.S. hegemonic management has prevented the outbreak of major wars. Contrary to this interpretation, I argue that the U.S. primacy has been inconsequential for intra-regional peace. Thus, I discuss the theoretical underpinnings of the hegemonic peace hypothesis, operationalize its causal argument, and ascertain its explanatory value in light of several cases of militarized interstate disputes. My findings corroborate that the U.S. hegemonic management is a tenuous explanation of the South American peace.

Introduction

The military victory of the U.S. in the Spanish-American War of 1898 sealed the rise of the U.S. as the hegemonic power in the Western Hemisphere. This situation has prompted many scholars to surmise that intra-regional peace in South America is caused by U.S. hegemony. Contrary to this interpretation, it is argued that the U.S. primacy has been inconsequential for the evolution of peace. To ascertain whether or not U.S. hegemony has been the cause of peace in South America, this study examines the evolution of intra-regional peace and internal political violence. Second, it discusses the theoretical underpinnings of the “hegemonic peace” hypothesis and sets in a testable form its causal argument. Third, several cases of bilateral militarized disputes in South America are analyzed to ascertain whether or not U.S. hegemony is, in fact, a robust explanation for the absence of major wars since 1935. In the final section it is presented the conclusions on the causal nexus between U.S. hegemony and intra-regional peace.

Instances of internal political violence plague the history of South American states. Less evident, however, is the fact that despite conditions for war and the actual outbreak of several militarized interstate crises, the region has remained comparatively more peaceful than any other peripheral area in the world. Since the Chaco War in 1935 only one “interstate war”(1) has erupted in South America: the 1982 South Atlantic Conflict between Argentina and the United Kingdom. Given this evidence, the absence of major intra-regional wars is a significant historical paradox.

The “Hegemonic Peace” Hypothesis

Edward D. Mansfield examines the relationship among the international distribution of power, trade and war. He concludes that “like all interstate wars, non-major-power wars begin more frequently during periods of hegemony than during non-hegemonic periods...”(2) A salient implication of this assertion is that hegemony does not lead automatically to interstate order, stability and peace. In particular, Mansfield’s general claim stands in sharp contrast with the view held by many mainstream realists, as well as that of several area specialists, who maintain that interstate peace in Latin America—not just in South America—is a direct consequence of U.S. hegemony.(3) In this study, I evaluate the explanatory value of the “hegemonic peace hypothesis” that connects causally U.S. hegemony with the provision and preservation of intra-regional peace in South America.

Scholars who support the proposition of the hegemonic peace in Latin America presuppose that U.S. capabilities and interests constraint the behavior of regional actors. This causal relationship entails two elements: the power source and the power target. Hence, for the purpose of appraising the explanatory value of this hypothesis from the power source, I assume the undisputed hegemonic role of the U.S. and the subordinate role of regional states. Also, identify the U.S. national interest with respect to the promotion and maintenance of intra-regional peace in Latin America in general and in South America in particular. For this purpose, I identify the publicly stated policy goals of the U.S. and contrast them with the extent of its tangible commitments. Then, I compare U.S. behavior in

South America with that in other world regions. The goal is to determine how resolute, assertive and successful the U.S. has been in promoting the peace in South America. Specifically, I focus on several cases of militarized crises, where, presumably, an authoritative U.S. response should have averted escalation.

From the power target angle, I ascertain the degree of South American compliance with U.S. objectives and directives regarding intra-regional peace and security. Hence, I establish the original demands of individual disputants. Then, I contrast these with their latest negotiating positions or the final outcome of the dispute. The intention is to establish how much the contenders have compromised their original demands to comply with U.S. directives.

According to realist precepts, the primary interest of any nation-state is to ensure its own security and survival. Hence, countries implement foreign policies to accomplish these goals. The U.S. is no exception. Since one of its foremost interests has been the exclusion of extra-continental rivals from the Western Hemisphere,⁽⁴⁾ the hegemonic peace hypothesis presupposes ostensibly that the U.S. has promoted intra-regional stability and peace in South America to forestall involvement opportunities to Great Power rivals in the region.

Prior to the Spanish-American War of 1898, the U.S. policy towards Latin America was characterized by a "benign neglect."⁽⁵⁾ Except for the 1846 war against Mexico, the U.S. did not display a marked interest in the internal or intra-regional affairs of Latin American countries. Still engaged in the process of nation-building, economically and militarily weak, and totally surrounded by ideologically and militarily hostile European Powers, the U.S. opted for a cautious position by turning its diplomatic attention to Europe. This was a tactic implemented to gain European support for the democratic experiment at home.⁽⁶⁾

Since 1898, the Latin American policy of the U.S. oscillated between interventionist and non-interventionist periods. During interventionist periods, the U.S. undertook an active role in preventing political instability and the penetration of extra-hemispheric influences in the region. To accomplish these objectives, the U.S. intervened militarily in the internal affairs of several countries and undermined governments through economic and political means. The intensity of the interventionist policy varied considerably over time and space. For example, while direct and overt U.S. military interventions were routine in Central America and the Caribbean basin, none took place in South America. On the other hand, the non-interventionist periods were characterized by the fulfillment of U.S. interests in Latin America via friendly, cooperative diplomatic negotiations, based on mutual respect.

Despite periodic oscillations, the U.S. pursued consistently the exclusion of rival Powers from the Western Hemisphere, and the support of friendly regimes capable of safeguarding its national interests. The Monroe Doctrine is the earliest public manifestation of U.S. interests in Latin America. On June 19, 1822 Gran Colombia became the first Latin American state to receive diplomatic recognition from the U.S.,⁽⁷⁾ and on December 2, 1823, President James Monroe issued a warning to the European Powers against trying to re-colonize the region.⁽⁸⁾ President Monroe acknowledged the essential differences between the political systems of the European Powers and the U.S. More importantly, he warned the Europeans that

[W]e should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety. [...] We could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing [newly independent states], or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States.⁽⁹⁾

In four subsequent instances, the spirit and application of the Monroe Doctrine was reaffirmed and expanded, underscoring the interest of the U.S. to exclude extra-continental Powers from the Western Hemisphere. First, in the midst of a bitter civil war between the Spanish population and Indians of Mayan descent on the peninsula of Yucatan, Yucatan officials appealed for aid concurrently from the U.S., Great Britain, and Spain. Concerned that European Powers could regain control of Mexican territory, President James K. Polk addressed the two houses of Congress on April 1848. In his appeal for aid for the leaders of Yucatan, he exhorted Congress to adopt measures "to prevent Yucatan from becoming a colony of any European Power, which, in no event, could be permitted by the United States; and, at the same time, to rescue the white race from extermination or expulsion from their country."⁽¹⁰⁾

The spirit of the Monroe Doctrine was further strengthened on July 20, 1895, when the U.S., demonstrating a marked degree of assertiveness, defied Great Britain in its dispute with Venezuela over the boundary with British Guyana. On that occasion, President Grover Cleveland ordered his Secretary of State, Richard Olney, to dispatch an aggressive note to the British government discussing the dispute, condemning British policy, and insisting upon impartial arbitration. For our purpose, however, the most revealing aspects of Olney's Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine are the reaffirmation of U.S. intent to prevent European meddling in the Americas and the public

declaration of U.S. hegemony in this region.⁽¹¹⁾

On December 6, 1904, President Theodore Roosevelt promulgated the third and broadest extension of the Monroe Doctrine. Prior to the unveiling of Roosevelt's Corollary, Germany, Great Britain, and Italy had blockaded Venezuela to enforce their financial claims. These were subsequently settled in 1895 in favor of the European Powers at The Hague Court of Arbitration. Then, again, in 1904, when European Powers threatened to use force against the Dominican Republic to collect defaulted debts, and mindful that a precedent for the use of force in the collection of national debts was set, President Roosevelt explained to Congress that

All that this country desires is to see the neighboring countries stable, orderly, and prosperous. [...] Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power.⁽¹²⁾

Finally, in 1912 rumors circulated that Japanese investors were considering the purchase from a U.S. company of a large strip of land near Magdalena Bay in Mexican Baja California. Since policymakers assumed that such an acquisition by a Japanese firm would threaten U.S. national security, the Department of State ordered the American company to stop negotiations with the Japanese investors because they violated the Monroe Doctrine. This was the situation when Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, introduced a resolution stating that

[T]he Government of the United States could not see without grave concern the possession of such harbor or other place by any corporation or association which has such a relation to another Government, not American, as to give that Government practical power of control for national purposes ...⁽¹³⁾

While this resolution received Senate approval, it was never endorsed by the administration of President William Howard Taft. Nonetheless, the passage of this resolution reaffirmed the significance for U.S. interests to prevent the involvement of rivals in the Western Hemisphere.

The Monroe Doctrine, together with Polk's, Olney's, Roosevelt's, and Lodge's Corollaries, established clearly three basic principles regarding U.S. interests in Latin America: First, they demonstrated the primary interest of the U.S. to prevent extra-continental rivals from gaining influence in the Americas. Second, they revealed U.S. disposition to intervene in the internal affairs of Latin American countries to thwart Great Power interference in the Western Hemisphere. Third, the U.S. began to consider itself a regional leader, with the authority and capabilities to lead Latin America.

With respect to the issue of intra-regional, interstate conflict and war, the Monroe Doctrine and the four corollaries discussed above remained silent. Interestingly enough, however, this aspect of Inter-American affairs was dealt differently from the issues of European and Japanese involvement in the Americas, and of domestic political turmoil in the Latin American republics. While U.S. policy was forceful regarding these two points, it was, on the other hand, accommodating on the issue of interstate disputes in Latin America. Since the early inception of Inter-American affairs the U.S. has chosen to remain non-authoritative, politically neutral, and non-committal regarding the use of military power as a conflict-settling mechanism.

Favoring neutrality and the bargaining table over authoritative policies and the use of force, the U.S. tried to nudge the real and potential belligerents toward diplomatic negotiations and peaceful settlements of crises and wars. In fact, there is no evidence that the U.S. ever exerted authoritative pressure to compel peaceful resolution of intra-regional, interstate disputes. For example, when in the course of the first South American intra-regional conflict, Argentina inquired whether its war with imperial Brazil (1824-1828) was not a violation of Monroe's Doctrine on the part of Brazil; Secretary of State Henry Clay replied that such a purely American war did not bear the "remotest analogy to the case which President Monroe's message deprecates."⁽¹⁴⁾ This sent a clear signal to the newly independent republics in South America: The U.S. would not intervene militarily or authoritatively in intra-regional, interstate conflicts, either to coerce belligerents into peaceful coexistence or to deter potential local revisionist states.⁽¹⁵⁾ Also, the U.S. maintained a distance from South America during the La Plata War (1836-1852) and then, again, during the War of the Triple Alliance (1864-1870).

It was not until the 1880s that the U.S. opted for a more direct approach to the question of interstate conflict and war in South America. Upon becoming Secretary of State in President James A. Garfield's administration, James G. Blaine implemented a new policy toward Latin America. As explained by diplomatic historian Alexander

DeConde:

“Blaine's policy toward Latin America had two main objectives: promotion of peace and increased trade ... Peace, he believed ... called for an effort on his part to try to end turbulence and wars then sweeping over parts of Latin America ...”(16)

The first opportunity to promote peace came in June 1881. At the request of Guatemala, Secretary of State Blaine offered his country's good offices for arbitration in a boundary dispute between Guatemala and Mexico. The result was detrimental to U.S. objectives because Mexico, believing that the U.S. sided with Guatemala, refused Blaine's offer. This caused the failure of his peacekeeping attempt and the temporary interruption of U.S.-Mexican trade relations.(17)

Secretary Blaine had a second opportunity to advance his peace policy during the War of the Pacific (1879-1884). The immediate cause of this war was Chilean expansion into an area rich in guano and nitrates. Alarmed by Chile's action, Bolivia and Peru signed a secret treaty of alliance against Chile. Thereafter, when Bolivia declared war on Chile in 1879, because the latter refused to pay a heavy tax on exported nitrates from Bolivian territory, Peru immediately honoured its treaty obligations with Bolivia and joined the war against Chile.(18)

By the time Blaine took office in March 1881, Chile had defeated Bolivia and controlled most of the Peruvian territory, including its besieged capital, Lima. Concerned with the precarious balance of power in South America and the prospect of a more generalised war in the region, Secretary Blaine took an active role to end the one-sided war. His position was specified in a stern note that he sent to the Chilean government through the U.S. minister to Chile, William H. Trescott. Secretary Blaine stated that

We cannot regard with unconcern the destruction of Peruvian nationality. If our good offices are rejected, and this policy of the absorption of an independent state be persisted in, this government will consider itself discharged from any further obligation to be influenced in its action by the position which Chile has assumed, and *will hold itself free to appeal to the other republics of this continent to join it in an effort to avert consequences which cannot be confined to Chile and Peru*, but which threaten with extreme danger the political institutions, the peaceful progress, and the liberal civilization of all America.(19)

Secretary Blaine's peacemaking effort failed for two fundamental reasons. First, since Chile was steadfastly determined to keep Peru's nitrate deposits as an indemnity for its victory, there was no latitude for compromise and peaceful settlement. Second, President Garfield's assassination in July 1881 and Blaine's impromptu departure from the State Department prevented him from carrying out his public threat to call for a multinational force to stop Chile's action in Peru. Subsequent to Blaine's departure, Frederick Frelinghuysen became Secretary of State in the new administration of President Chester A. Arthur. Unfortunately for Peru, the new Secretary came with no plans to either unilaterally force Chile to acquiesce to U.S. demands, or to organize a multilateral, hemispheric approach to resolve the War of the Pacific. Therefore, Chile did not accede to a conciliatory peace and kept all the victor's spoils at the end of the war.

Notwithstanding Secretary Blaine's failure to exert moral pressure on Chile through Inter-American cooperation, this idea became the kernel of the Pan-American movement a decade later. In May 1888, Congress passed a resolution asking President Grover Cleveland to call a conference of American states. It stated that the purpose of this conference was to promote uniform trade regulations, free trade, and regional peace. The culmination of this request was the First International Conference of American States held in Washington from October 2, 1889 to April 19, 1890.(20)

The significance of the First Inter-American Conference was that it gave institutional form to U.S. policy interest on the issue of intra-regional war in the Americas. In this gathering the U.S. made explicit its desire to pursue the peaceful resolution of interstate conflict through arbitration and diplomatic negotiations.(21) No allusion was ever made to the possibility of a unilateral coercive and/or authoritative effort on the part of the U.S. to resolve any dispute. This reaffirms the long-running practice of the U.S. to remain impartial and to favor diplomatic means for the prevention and resolution of intra-regional conflicts in Latin America.

From the closing of the First Inter-American Conference in Washington in 1890 to the introduction of the Good Neighbor Policy on March 4, 1933 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, U.S. policy toward Latin America followed a somewhat dichotomous approach. On the one hand, the U.S. intervened repeatedly in the internal affairs of some of the Caribbean and Central American states. Based on the presumption that U.S. national security demanded control of areas that other Great Powers might utilize as footholds in the Western Hemisphere, the administrations of Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson gradually instituted a system of

"protectorates" in the Caribbean basin and Central America. Between 1901 and 1933, Cuba, Panama, Mexico, Nicaragua, Honduras, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic experienced recurrent U.S. military interventions and political control.(22)

While the U.S. was engaged in an interventionist policy in the Caribbean basin and Central America, it continued to pursue, on the other hand, a diplomatic approach to the peaceful settlement of interstate disputes in South America. It routinely condemned the use of force by Latin American states. As Bryce Wood explains, "The United States rarely undertook to enforce peace between states in the Americas, but it did feel a deep sense of responsibility to assist morally, ceremonially, and institutionally in the maintenance of peace."(23)

No other issue in Inter-American affairs demonstrates more accurately the sharp contrast in U.S. interest and policy toward Middle and South America than its mediating role in intra-regional, interstate conflicts. Three different cases prior to 1935 illustrate clearly the U.S. position and level of commitment to the maintenance of interstate peace in these two separate sub-regions. First, in 1921 an acrimonious boundary dispute between Panama and Costa Rica made war appear imminent. Although this conflict was settled when Panama yielded to a decision arbitrated by the U.S., it was only after the latter dispatched to the area a battleship, four hundred marines, and an ultimatum that it would not tolerate a resumption of the clashes that had been taking place along the border.(24)

Contrasting sharply with this assertive position in the Panamanian-Costa Rican case, a more conciliatory U.S. worked arduously toward the peaceful resolution of two different crises taking place concurrently in South America. First, the U.S. tried to mediate the 1928 Paraguayan-Bolivian dispute over the Chaco Boreal territory. This crisis eventually evolved into the Chaco War.(25) Second, the Letícia dispute, simmering since 1922, broke into fighting on 31 August 1932, when three hundred armed Peruvian civilians took control of the hamlet of Letícia in Colombian territory.(26) In both cases the U.S. demonstrated a relentless commitment to the peaceful prevention and resolution of these crises. At no time during the long negotiating process, however, did the U.S. try to compel the belligerents toward a negotiated settlement, utilizing intimidation, coercion, or any other form of punitive or authoritative action. As historian Bryce Wood affirms "... the government of the U.S. did not find it possible to take the lead in the adoption of measures firm enough to prevent warfare in South America."(27) Undoubtedly, the U.S. preferred interstate peace in South America, but it was not prepared to enforce it. In fact, reflecting on the U.S. course of action regarding these two territorial disputes in the 1930s, Secretary of State Cordell Hull writes in his *memoirs* that after extensive consultations with President Roosevelt, the decision was made to cooperate with, and acquiesce in the assumption of jurisdiction by the League of Nations Advisory Committee handling these disputes in the heart of the Western Hemisphere. He elaborates further that:

Our acceptance signified our willingness to cooperate with other nations in the settlement of Latin American questions. *Unilateral action on our part was now in the discard.* We began to apply a principle to which we adhered in the years to follow. This was to refrain from acting until after having consulted with all the other interested nations. Only in this way could we work from under the deep-seated resentment engendered in Latin America by previous one-sided actions of our country.(28)

The handling of the Chaco and Letícia crises demonstrate that, in spite of U.S. resolute commitment to the peaceful settlement of these disputes, they evolved contrary to the publicly expressed objectives of the U.S. in the region. While the Letícia conflict was contained to few casualties and small scale fighting, the Chaco dispute escalated into the only major South American war in the twentieth century.(29) Thus, one infers from these outcomes that, at least prior to 1935, the power and diplomatic leadership of the U.S. could neither deter hostile neighbors from fighting nor lead them to peaceful resolution of their militarized conflicts.

When the Chaco War ended in 1935, the Roosevelt administration was concerned principally with the growth and diffusion of Fascist regimes in Europe and their increased activities in Latin America. Consequently, the U.S. assembled a cooperative hemispheric security system to counteract these developments in the late 1930s. Besides aiming to stymie the spread of Fascist influence to the Western Hemisphere, the U.S. sought to establish an institutional mechanism to settle intra-regional, interstate conflicts and to provide mutual security to its members.

The Inter-American security system that emerged in the late 1930s, and strengthened during and after World War II, was in part an extension of the First International Conference of American States held in Washington in 1889. In this gathering, as in subsequent International Conferences of American States and Special Conferences, the U.S. continued to profess its absolute commitment to the peaceful settlement of intra-regional disputes in the Americas.(30)

Ultimately, the Rio de Janeiro Special Conference of 1947 produced the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance. To the extent that this treaty reflects the position and diplomatic leadership of the U.S. in the post-World War period, it is an unequivocal statement, delineating U.S. interest and policy on the issue of interstate

disputes in the Americas. The Rio Treaty stipulates clearly in Article 2 that:

[T]he High Contracting Parties undertake to submit every controversy which may arise between them to methods of peaceful settlement and to endeavor to settle any such controversy among themselves by means of the procedures in force in the Inter-American System before referring it to the General Assembly or the Security Council of the United Nations.(31)

Furthermore, Article 3 introduces the concept of collective security into the Inter-American system. It specifies that:

[A]n armed attack by any State against an American State shall be considered as an attack against all the American States and, consequently, each of the said Contracting Parties undertakes to assist in meeting the attack in the exercise of the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense.(32)

In sum, the Rio Treaty embodies the publicly-stated interests of the U.S. in Latin America and, more importantly, it has served as the main legal/institutional framework for dealing with the prevention and/or resolution of interstate conflicts in the Americas.

The preceding analysis demonstrates U.S. commitment to the promotion and maintenance of interstate peace in Latin America. Also, it documents how instrumental the U.S. was in organizing institutional mechanisms for the promotion of interstate peace. Clearly, it favored diplomatic over military and authoritative options to prevent or resolve militarized crises in South America prior to 1935. Thus, given its evident power and demonstrated interest in preventing the outbreak of war in the Americas, this study explores next whether or not the absence of a major war in South America since 1935 is a direct consequence of U.S. hegemony.

Is U.S. hegemony the Cause of Intra-regional Peace?

While the end of the Chaco War in 1935 ushered in the longest period of interstate peace in South America, the region has not been immune from recurrent territorial disputes and militarized interstate crises. Several dyads involving conflicting claims remained active over the years: namely, the Ecuadorian-Peruvian dispute over territory in the Amazon; the Argentine-Chilean quarrel over the islands in the Beagle Channel; and the Colombian-Venezuelan controversy over the Gulf of Venezuela. Since none of these disputes escalated into a major war, various analysts attribute the absence of war to the pacifying effect of U.S. hegemony. Subsequently, I examine the explanatory value of the hegemonic peace hypothesis in light of evidence from several cases of militarized interstate disputes from the three dyads listed above.

In the analysis of the case studies, I present a brief background to each crisis. That is, I outline the origin of the dispute, the stake in question, and the claims of the disputants. Second, I examine the position of the U.S. in each case and its efforts to prevent war. Third, I explain either the final outcome, or most recent status of the controversy. Finally, I appraise whether or not the position of the U.S. ultimately prevailed, influencing the outcome of the crisis and, thus, corroborating the hegemonic peace claim in South America.

The Ecuadorian-Peruvian Dyad

The Ecuadorian-Peruvian territorial dispute was the most enduring and virulent controversy in South America since 1935. These countries began to clash over the limits of their territory in 1830. The stakes of this quarrel involved a small area in the Pacific Ocean and some 120,000 square miles of territory east of the Andes and between the Equator and the Marañón River. Ecuador aimed at gaining control over parts of the Amazon jungle and the river system draining this area.(33) On the other hand, Peru's objective was to prevent Ecuador from expanding its territory eastward, particularly after Peru's defeat in the 1932 Leticia dispute with Colombia.

Ecuador and Peru were at the brink of a major war over disputed territory in 1941, 1981, and 1995. First, on July 5, 1941 hostilities broke out when an Ecuadorian army patrol encountered a group of Peruvian agricultural workers and civil guards near the Zarumilla River, inside Ecuador's borders. While in Quito it was reported that the Peruvians opened fire against the patrol, in Lima, the foreign ministry issued a statement explaining that Ecuadorian soldiers attacked Peruvian positions and were defeated.(34) Before both countries finally negotiated the Talara truce on October 2, 1941, they mobilized about 18,000 troops, and sustained enormous material losses and approximately 600 combat casualties.(35) Peru, the victor in the conflict, prevented Ecuadorian expansion in the Amazon, gained military control over the province of El Oro in Ecuador, and threatened to overtake Guayaquil.

Ecuador and Peru signed the Protocol of Rio de Janeiro on January 29, 1942 as the result of considerable diplomatic maneuvering by Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and the U.S. The treaty ended the fighting along the Ecuadorian-Peruvian border in the 1940s and specified the boundary line between the two countries. Moreover, it stipulated that Peru would withdraw its troops from Ecuadorian territory, and granted Ecuador freedom of navigation on rivers controlled by Peru. Finally, the treaty designated Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and the U.S. as

guarantors of the peace.(36) In this capacity the U.S continued to be involved in the territorial dispute as a mediator rather than as a hegemonic enforcer of interstate peace in the Americas.

The position of the U.S. in 1941 as a neutral mediator was consistent with events dating back to the war scare of 1910 between Ecuador and Peru and throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The Marañón conflict of 1941 was the culmination of an arduous diplomatic process that began on August 1, 1887, when the foreign ministers of Ecuador and Peru signed an arbitration accord. They agreed to submit the territorial question to the decision of the King of Spain. The decision was delayed over twenty years and, finally, in 1910 King Alfonso XIII of Spain declined to emit a verdict, because a partial and premature disclosure of unfavorable terms of the award for Ecuador created a public outcry in that country.(37) Mutual recriminations in Quito and Lima led to a general military mobilization in both countries. But under strong diplomatic pressure from Argentina, Brazil, and the United States, the war scare of 1910 ceased immediately. The three countries offered to act as mediators and declared that it was "unthinkable that Ecuador and Peru should go to war over a boundary dispute which both, by solemn agreement, submitted to arbitration."(38)

Again, the U.S. effort to maintain its role as an impartial mediator, and its commitment to a peaceful settlement of the Ecuadorian-Peruvian dispute were revealed in a cogent exchange of letters between the President of Ecuador, Federico Páez, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt. On May 7, 1936, President Páez wrote to President Roosevelt requesting him to pressure Peru to accede to move the Ecuadorian-Peruvian Peace Conference from Lima to Washington. This petition was accompanied by yet another reference to Ecuador's inevitable recourse "to defend by arms her vital interests."(39) President Roosevelt responded:

But I feel confident that Your Excellency will recognize that the arbitrator of an international dispute [...] must refrain from taking any action which would appear to imply the bringing of any pressure, even in the form of moral influence, upon either of the parties to the dispute. If [...] I were now to take any action, even action in the nature of a friendly and informal request, which might be construed by the Government of Peru as being beyond the limits of complete judicial impartiality, the confidence of the Peruvian Government in the arbitrator might be shaken...(40)

President Roosevelt's statement clarified to all South American states that the new policy of the U.S. was to participate as another state among equals, and that it was unwilling to exert unilateral pressure on any one party to a dispute in the region.(41)

From the war scare of 1910 to the 1936 Washington conference between the delegations of Ecuador and Peru, the bilateral relations of these states were plagued by multiple border incidents and failed diplomatic initiatives to solve the territorial dispute. The Washington conference of 1936 proved to be no different from other diplomatic efforts. It was broken off in 1938, without having achieved a negotiated settlement.(42) Notwithstanding its immediate failure, the conference in Washington is an important element for an analysis of the U.S. role in the Amazonian dispute. Throughout these negotiations, U.S. diplomats adhered firmly to a position of impartiality, refusing to lead negotiations on a compromise boundary line.(43)The reaction of Under Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, to the possibility of Ecuador resorting to force in June 1937 illustrates this position. Overtly concerned with Ecuador's posture, Welles asked Ecuador's envoy, Colón Eloy Alfaro:

[I]f he would not consider it peculiarly deplorable [...] for his Government to consider breaking off negotiations or even to contemplate hostilities. [...] how would it be possible for the Government of Ecuador, after the peace treaties which it had signed at the Buenos Aires Conference and in view of the unanimous desire on the part of all of the American Republics there expressed always to resort to peaceful means of adjudicating disputes, now to contemplate hostilities when no act of aggression had been committed against Ecuador by Peru.(44)

Ecuador did not resort to war at the time. Instead, it responded by proposing arbitration of the whole controversy by the U.S. President. The proposal was accompanied by an outline of Ecuador's position on the boundary line and by another reference to war as "our only recourse."(45)

Further illustration of the role played by the U.S. and its self-perception during the Ecuadorian-Peruvian Conference of 1936 in Washington can be intuited from Secretary Welles's reply to Ecuador's proposal of August 26, 1937. He responded that:

[W]hile this Government was acting as host to the two delegations, it did not possess the functions of mediator nor of intermediary and that, while I was prepared and had been prepared to do everything I could to facilitate the successful termination of the negotiations, I did not feel authorized by either of the two Governments involved to suggest specific solutions or methods of procedure.(46)

The collapse of the Ecuadorian-Peruvian Conference on September 29, 1938 effectively ended for two years any sustained effort by third parties to settle their dispute. Only in the December 1938 conference of American states in Lima, U.S. officials made several unofficial attempts to resolve the controversy.⁽⁴⁷⁾ At this gathering, Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, discussed with Peru's Foreign Minister, Carlos Concha, the Ecuadorian-Peruvian situation. In his report to Under Secretary Welles of his conversation with Concha, Hull writes:

I told him that the world situation requires that the peace of the Americas be maintained; that the public sentiment in the Americas is unanimous in its insistence that there be peace on this hemisphere; that the Ecuador-Peru boundary dispute is the only major blight on the peace of the Americas; that because of its resources, strength and experience Peru should take the initiative although Ecuador of course should do its full part; and after complimenting Dr. Concha for his handling of the Conference, appealed to him to take upon his shoulders the responsibility for removing the last major obstacle towards peace in the Americas. Dr. Concha has assured me that the President [Manuel Prado Ugarteche] is genuinely desirous of a settlement of the dispute and I believe that Dr. Concha was impressed by my personal appeal to him to take the initiative and endeavor to find a solution. ... Under the circumstances, I believe I have done all that I possibly can.⁽⁴⁸⁾

Again, this exchange with Concha is indicative of U.S. circumspection, limitations, and/or inability to act as an authoritative enforcer of interstate peace in South America. This is particularly evident when the U.S. Secretary of State confides to one of his Under Secretaries, as Hull does, that he has done all he can, omitting all references to any sort of authoritative U.S. action to settle the dispute. In fact, Hull makes no mention of this territorial dispute in his *memoirs*.⁽⁴⁹⁾

The role of the U.S. just prior to the Ecuadorian-Peruvian dispute of 1941 is revealed in two other instances. First, in receipt of a tepid acceptance message from Peru to a mediation proposal made by Argentina, Brazil, and the U.S., Secretary Cordell Hull, showing reticence to apply pressure on the disputants, suggested to the other mediators that the course of action should be to consider the messages of acceptance from Peru and Ecuador as "satisfactory." He "feared" that if any attempt was made by the three governments to elicit a more favorable response from Peru, the latter would claim that "pressure was being exercised upon it which was not consonant with its national sovereignty and dignity."⁽⁵⁰⁾

Second, when Oswaldo Aranha, the Brazilian Minister for Foreign Affairs, tried to include Chile as a mediator and future guarantor of the Ecuador-Peru peace accord, Secretary Hull confided candidly to the U.S. Ambassador in Lima that:

[T]his Government *had no prior knowledge* of the renewed initiative with regard to the inclusion of Chile until it was informed that Foreign Minister Aranha in the course of his visit to Santiago had agreed with the Chilean Foreign Minister with regard thereto and had thereafter agreed with the Foreign Minister of Argentina as to the desirability of this step.⁽⁵¹⁾

Such an uneventful episode, nevertheless, demonstrates U.S. detachment from the thrust of diplomatic maneuvering in the aftermath of the outbreak of hostilities between Ecuador and Peru in July 1941.

The evidence presented above indicates, on the one hand, that the U.S. was publicly committed to help bring about a peaceful settlement between Ecuador and Peru. But, on the other hand, the record discloses that in the years prior to the 1941 Marañón crisis, the U.S. was unwilling either to force or to lead an authoritative unilateral territorial arrangement in South America. First, it was Secretary Welles's statements of impartiality and his refusal to impose a unilateral settlement on Ecuador and Peru. More importantly, however, it was President Roosevelt's refusal to exert any type of pressure on both disputants, and Secretary Hull's candid admission that he had done all he could to convince Peru to take the diplomatic initiative towards a peaceful solution of the controversy.

In the final analysis, all the peace conferences, negotiations, and diplomatic efforts orchestrated by the U.S., in conjunction with several other South American states, did not prevent the outbreak of a militarized crisis between Ecuador and Peru in July 1941. Hence, I conclude that in this particular instance the U.S. failed to prevent the outbreak of hostilities and promote a peaceful and long-lasting settlement in South America.

Due to Ecuador's military weakness in the 1941 Marañón conflict, to the U.S.'s reluctance to intervene authoritatively in favor of Ecuador, to U.S. concerns with the war in Europe, and to the haste of the other South American states to close a violent chapter in the Ecuador-Peru territorial dispute, Ecuador was effectively compelled to accept the 1942 Protocol of Rio de Janeiro. This treaty shattered Ecuador's sovereign objective in the Amazon.

Dissatisfied with the Rio Protocol and claiming that it had signed the treaty under duress, Ecuador invoked the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (the 1947 Rio Treaty) in 1955. It argued that Peru was preparing to invade again. At this juncture, the Organization of American States organized a peace-observing team of military attachés stationed in Lima. To The military observers found no evidence of Peruvian military preparation for a possible invasion of Ecuador. Despite this setback in the 1950's, Ecuador was able to keep alive the territorial dispute with Peru due to certain legal, cartographic, and geographic technicalities. Finally, in 1960 Ecuador formally declared the 1942 Rio de Janeiro Protocol null and void. Peru rejected this unilateral action. It claimed that the territorial dispute with Ecuador had been settled permanently at the 1942 Rio de Janeiro Conference.(52)

Ecuador and Peru clashed militarily for a second time on January 28, 1981. This time the area involved was a poorly demarcated 48-mile stretch of border in the Cóndor Mountains, believed to be rich in gold and oil. In 1942, when the Rio Protocol specified the border between the two states, the cartographers were unaware of the existence of the Cenepa River. Since the discovery of this river, Ecuador claimed jurisdiction over 130 square miles west of the Cenepa watershed.

The immediate source of the 1981 militarized crisis was Peru's claim that Ecuador had occupied three abandoned Peruvian military outposts in the Cóndor Mountains. Consequently, Peru launched a surprise attack against Ecuadorian forces allegedly stationed there.(53) Both nations sustained heavy material losses and some combat casualties(54) before February 2, 1981, when they accepted cease-fire appeals from Pope John Paul II, the United States, and other Latin American states, including the three Rio Treaty guarantors.

The fact that the 1981 militarized crisis lasted only five days, and that it was prevented from escalating, is the result of the quick and decisive action of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and the U.S. On January 29, 1981 the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States convened in Washington and urged Ecuador and Peru to accept the creation of a commission to investigate the border clashes. Ecuador agreed immediately to this proposal but Peru rejected it, arguing that only the Rio Protocol guarantors were competent to mediate the latest crisis.(55) On the heels of the O.A.S. mediation failure, the four guarantors, together with representatives from Ecuador and Peru, gathered in Brasilia on January 31 to negotiate a peaceful settlement. After these discussions, the two warring parties finally agreed to terminate hostilities on February 2 and to continue negotiating a peaceful solution.

In the 1981 crisis, as in the previous border clash between Ecuador and Peru, the official position of the U.S. was to remain neutral and to urge the warring parties to negotiate a peaceful solution to their century-old territorial controversy. Despite press reports indicating that U.S. officials were "working behind the scene to help minimize the damage,"(56) I found no official evidence of an authoritative effort on the part of the U.S. to prevent further military encounters in South America.(57) In fact, the boldest U.S. action toward this end came on February 7, 1977 when the Carter Administration blocked Israel from selling to Ecuador 24 Kfir aircraft. U.S. officials maintained that, since the General Electric J-79 engines of those airplanes were U.S.-made, the United States government had the right to veto the transaction. Instead, Ecuador purchased 18 advanced French Mirage F-1 aircraft.(58)

It appears that the U.S. had a similar role as that of the three Latin American guarantors in the 1981 Ecuadorian-Peruvian conflict. Even when the U.S. acted to defuse tension between the disputants, as was the case with the blocked sale of Israeli Kfir combat aircrafts to Ecuador in 1977, Ecuador and Peru, as well as other South American countries were able to circumvent U.S. restrictions on arms supplies by procuring weapons from other sources. In the end, the four Rio Protocol guarantors share equally both blame for the failure to prevent the outbreak of hostilities along the Ecuadorian-Peruvian border and the credit for quickly terminating the military clash.

Subsequent to the cease-fire agreement that ended the 1981 conflict, Ecuador and Peru were unable to settle peacefully their territorial dispute. Ecuador remained adamant about its "sovereign right" to be an Amazonian state and continued to press the issue on its right to have access to the Amazon and the river system draining this region. It insisted that the discovery of the Cenepa River, a tributary of the Marañón River, strengthened its claim over parts of the Cóndor Mountains between the Zamora and Santiago rivers. In the midst of this tense and volatile relationship, Peru and Ecuador clashed for the third time on January 27, 1995.(59) Again, the immediate cause of this incident was Peru's claim that Ecuador had occupied Peruvian territory in the remote Andean region of the Cóndor Mountains. In response, Peru launched an attack to dislodge Ecuadorian soldiers from two border posts within the disputed area. Meanwhile, Ecuador's President, Sixto Durán Ballén vowed that, "Ecuador will not back off from the positions that it maintains in the border." He added, "[I]f we back down, we are convinced that Peru will continue to invade our land."(60)

The January 1995 militarized interstate dispute between Ecuador and Peru proved to be the most costly crisis in South America since the 1941 Marañón conflict. The estimated human toll on both sides fluctuates between as few as 47 casualties to as many as 300 soldiers killed.(61) Several estimates put the cost of the military campaign for

each side at ten million dollars per day.(62) Despite these heavy losses, the territorial dispute still remained unsettled until 1996. And the cease-fire agreement that went into effect on February 17, 1995 did not deal with the basic problems that originally caused this latest military conflict between Ecuador and Peru.(63)

Based on the material reviewed, I did not find evidence indicating that the U.S. played a more significant mediating role than that of the other three South American guarantors. In fact, in one of the few official statements I uncovered discussing the role of the U.S. in the 1995 Ecuadorian-Peruvian crisis, Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, Alexander Watson, explains that the guarantors' job "was not to resolve the underlying dispute by any means, but to try to end the current fighting, stop the bloodshed, and, if we could, set up a mechanism by which the underlying dispute could be addressed in an effective way." He further elaborates, "[T]he Rio Protocol does not give to the guarantor countries authority to determine or impose a solution." Moreover, he discloses that, "the Brazilians are the leaders of the guarantor group." He also indicates that "[the United States] will be fully committed and prepared to work intensely with Peru and Ecuador as may be required." (64) When the first cease-fire attempt failed on Thursday, February 2, President Bill Clinton wrote to Presidents Fujimori and Durán Ballén urging both to accept a cease-fire. The next day, Michael D. McCurry, the White House spokesman, said: "The United States is prepared to participate in a mission to observe a cease-fire once one is in place."(65) These efforts pale in light of those made by South American diplomats and heads of states, and next to the level of U.S. involvement in Bosnia, Haiti, Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. For instance, President Carlos Menem of Argentina admitted on one occasion that throughout the conflict he talked on the telephone seven or eight times with his counterparts in Ecuador and Peru, urging both to cease fighting.(66) The turning point in this crisis came after seven days of high-level negotiations in Brasilia, when Peru declared a unilateral truce on Tuesday, February 14.(67) Shortly thereafter, Ecuador accepted that offer and the cease-fire went into effect officially on Friday, February 17.

The record demonstrates that the January 1995 Ecuadorian-Peruvian conflict, as the previous two crises in 1941 and 1981, was neither prevented nor successfully solved by the U.S. hegemony in South America. These crises generated out of their own complex dynamics. Despite the poor and militarily weak conditions of the belligerents, it seems that there was little the U.S. and other regional powers could do, short of outright coercion, to prevent them from fighting.

International coercion is a tool of statecraft that the U.S. seemed reluctant to utilize in South America to prevent intra-regional, interstate conflict. Hence, the role of the U.S. was limited to be a mediator rather than an enforcer of peace. In this vein, the U.S. and other regional states played a part in bringing the two disputants to the bargaining table whenever hostilities flared up. The negotiations that began after the 1995 militarized crisis finally netted a permanent, peaceful settlement in 1996.

The Argentinean-Chilean Dyad

Relations between Argentina and Chile have been affected historically by as many as twenty-five different territorial disputes along their 2,500-mile border.(68) Since the 1870's, their boundary question has involved three distinct geographical areas: the inter-Andean plateaus between the eastern and western heights of the Andes, the Patagonia region, and the Strait of Magellan and Tierra del Fuego. Among these, the latter zone has been the most salient and difficult to settle and demarcate.

Argentina was less interested than Chile in controlling the Strait of Magellan and Tierra del Fuego in its early years as an independent state. In the late 1870's, however, Argentina changed its foreign policy objective and decided to challenge Chile's claim over this region. The ensuing controversy was initially settled after Argentina and Chile, with the help of the U.S.' mediation negotiated and signed a boundary treaty on July 23 1881. This agreement stipulated that Chile would give up its claim to Patagonia in exchange for Argentina's acceptance of Chilean sovereignty over the entire Strait of Magellan. Moreover, Chile accepted neutralization of the strait, and Argentina agreed never to block the Atlantic access to and egress from the strait. Finally, a provision was made for the division of Tierra del Fuego between them, and for the arbitration of disputes arising over interpretation of the treaty's terms.(69)

The issue of how to divide Tierra del Fuego and define the line between the South Atlantic and South Pacific proved to be intractable. At the centre of this controversy figured three small islands (Nueva, Pictón, and Lennox) at the eastern entrance to the Beagle Channel. Since neither the limits of this channel, nor the ownership of these islands were ever clearly defined in the boundary treaty of 1881, Argentina challenged the easternmost point of Chilean sovereignty involving the possession of these three islands. In a series of boundary treaties, known as "Pactos de Mayo," signed on May 28 1902, Argentina succeeded in obtaining from Chile the concession that the islands were negotiable and should be submitted to arbitration by the British Crown.(70) This is the inception of the so-called Beagle Channel dispute, which brought Argentina and Chile to the brink of war in late 1978.(71)

Except for the signing on June 28 1915 of a protocol, reiterating the submission for arbitration of the ownership of

the islands in the Beagle Channel, the matter remained dormant until May 3 1938. On that occasion, the Foreign Ministers of Argentina and Chile informed the U.S. Ambassador in Chile, Norman Armour, that they had agreed to resubmit to arbitration the question of the islands at the eastern end of the Beagle Channel. They agreed to rely on a sole arbitrator and they chose for that position the Chief Justice of the U.S. However, when Chief Justice Hughes excused himself, the two states requested the services of the U.S. Attorney General, Homer Cummings.(72)

Subsequent to Cummings' failed mediation attempt in the 1940's, the British Crown took up the matter again in 1971. Wary of British neutrality, Argentina insisted that the arbitration arrangement be changed so that the actual judgment would be made by an impartial panel of five members of the International Court of Justice at The Hague. In early 1977, the British Crown announced a ruling confirming Chile's sovereign right over the disputed islands. Then, in December 1977, Argentina threatened to declare the arbitration not binding and stated that it would pursue the matter in bilateral negotiations with Chile.(73)

Bilateral negotiations between Argentina and Chile began on January 14 1978 when General Manuel Contreras Sepúlveda, former director of Chile's intelligence agency, delivered a proposal from President Augusto Pinochet to President Jorge Rafael Videla of Argentina.(74) The two military presidents met privately for five hours on January 19.(75) Five days later, on January 25, Argentina officially "repudiated" the international arbitration decision.(76)

During the first half of 1978, the rhetoric coming out of Argentina and Chile became increasingly bellicose. By August, bilateral negotiations had reached an impasse, and the negotiators fixed November 2 1978 as the final date to arrive at an agreement.(77) In September and October of 1978 the tempo of acrimonious allegations picked up, with both sides accusing each other of troop movements and illegal incursions.(78) When the November 2 deadline came, the negotiators for both countries announced that they had not been able to work out an agreement but that they would urge their respective governments to seek a peaceful solution.(79)

While Argentina increased pressure on Chile by demanding a "total accord as soon as possible," Chile proposed that the two countries should submit the dispute to a friendly nation, like Spain, for arbitration. Argentina rejected this proposal, asserting that, "direct negotiations [were] the suitable way to resolve disputes."(80) Belligerent statements from both governments, deployment of armored forces along the border, naval maneuvers near the Beagle Channel, and troop movements led both countries "to be four hours away" from a major military conflagration on December 23 1978.(81) War was only narrowly averted when Pope John Paul II agreed to arbitrate the dispute and Argentina accepted his mediating role.(82) Finally, on January 23 1984 the Vatican announced that Argentina and Chile had reached an agreement regarding the Beagle Channel dispute.(83)

The role of the U.S. throughout the time leading up to the Beagle Channel crisis and during the six weeks of tense relations was consistent with its previous posture in other disputes in South America since 1935. The Carter administration urged both governments to avoid war and to find a peaceful solution to their territorial dispute. It asked the Organization of American States to intervene. But the U.S. efforts were to no avail in settling this crisis.(84)

I discovered no evidence indicating that the U.S. government leaned heavily on either of the two disputants to prevent or solve the Beagle Channel controversy. In fact, it appears that the U.S. government kept a distance from this imbroglio. For instance, when Argentine and Chilean negotiators were trying to settle their territorial dispute, President Jimmy Carter, addressing the O.A.S General Assembly, recalled the coming centennial anniversary of the War of the Pacific between Chile and Peru, and pledged to view this occasion "as an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to harmony in this hemisphere and to avoid conflict." While he mentioned that other disputes (i.e., Bolivia's access to the sea, the Honduras-El Salvador border dispute, and the future of Belize) in the Western Hemisphere could "be settled peacefully," he avoided even to allude to the ongoing discussions between Argentina and Chile over the disputed Beagle Channel.(85) Similarly, at the height of this crisis on December 14 1978, in a major U.S. policy address to the Pan American Society of the U.S. in New York, Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, Viron P. Vaky did not even mention the failed negotiations.(86)

In sum, the only allusion to the Beagle Channel crisis and the successful mediation by Pope John Paul II in late 1978 was U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance's expression of appreciation to the Holy See "for undertaking to mediate the long-standing and troubling differences between Argentina and Chile concerning the Beagle Channel."(87) As is evident from this discussion, it was the Vatican's—not the U.S.'s—diplomacy that prevented the outbreak of hostilities between Argentina and Chile over the Beagle Channel. Thus, I surmise from this case that U.S. hegemony had very little to do with maintaining interstate peace in South America.

The Colombian-Venezuelan Dyad

Venezuela has been involved in territorial disputes with both Colombia and Guyana. Out of these two dyads, the most threatening to intra-regional peace has been the long-running, low intensity feud with Colombia over the Gulf

of Venezuela, the Los Monjes archipelago, and the Guajira Peninsula. (88) This dispute stems from opposing claims over the line dividing the seabed and territorial waters in these three areas. In 1939, Venezuela and Colombia signed the Treaty of Non-aggression, Conciliation, Arbitration, and Judicial Settlement of Border Demarcation and Navigation. The agreement was intended to settle all territorial disputes between them, but many influential Venezuelans, including members of the military, disavowed the treaty as overly "generous" to Colombia and as a "treasonous mutilation of Venezuelan sovereignty." (89) Consequently, in March 1981 the Venezuelan Supreme Court accepted a plea to abrogate the 1939 treaty with Colombia.

The Venezuelan Supreme Court decision on the 1939 treaty was viewed in Colombia as an indication that Venezuela was becoming more aggressive and less open to compromise. In the 1970's and early 1980's, the bargaining position of both countries hardened and a settlement became increasingly difficult to achieve. The matter came to an impasse on the evening of Wednesday, August 5 1987, when the Venezuelan Ambassador to Colombia, Luís La Corte, handed to President Virgilio Barco Vargas the official Venezuelan rejection of the Colombian proposal to rejoin the Permanent Conciliation Commission and settle the territorial differences between the two countries. (90)

The territorial dispute between Colombia and Venezuela reached a serious standoff that Sunday, August 9, when Colombia tried to force the issue by flexing its military muscle. On that occasion, the Colombian Navy stationed the corvette, A.R.C. Caldas less than a mile south of the Castilletes parallel, inside of what Venezuela defines as its territorial waters in the Gulf of Venezuela. This navy vessel remained in that location until Tuesday, August 18. (91)

The Caldas incident, as known in Colombia and Venezuela, caused a national uproar in Venezuela. Not only ultra-nationalist elements, but all segments of Venezuelan society called for a military response to Colombia's provocation. Acceding to public demands, President Jaime Lusinchi ordered the Venezuelan armed forces on full alert along the Colombian border, and sent a stern message to his Colombian counterpart demanding the relocation of the corvette to Colombian territorial waters. Also, he requested an official explanation of the incident and the resumption of direct diplomatic negotiations between the two countries as soon as possible. (92) Colombia acceded and moved the naval vessel back inside its territorial waters. (93) Then, both countries pledged to continue negotiations toward a long-lasting peaceful settlement of this controversy. Notwithstanding the absence of a final solution to the territorial dispute between Colombia and Venezuela, (94) the crisis was solved peacefully through short-term bilateral negotiations, and without the mediation of any international actor.

The Caldas crisis illustrates the potential for interstate conflict in South America. It reveals that peace is maintained through means other than outright U.S. hegemonic management in the region. I found no evidence indicating any type of U.S. involvement to prevent or settle this dispute. (95) Moreover, the Caldas incident was temporarily settled without the mediating efforts of a plethora of state actors as were the previous cases examined above.

Conclusion: South American Compliance

In the final analysis, the peacemaking and/or peacekeeping impact of the U.S. on the South American peace appears tenuous. Despite its public commitment to the prevention and resolution of armed conflict in South America, several militarized crises erupted in the post-Chaco-War period. These incidents evince the inability of the U.S. to manage events unilaterally in South America, especially the maintenance of interstate peace and stability. The evidence of several militarized interstate disputes reveals that when nations decide to use violence and military force to achieve their national interests, the U.S. government can do little to prevent that. Short of a costly unilateral military intervention to enforce peace, which did not appear to be the U.S. policy choice, this country possessed no more diplomatic leverage than any large South American state. Further, the record demonstrates that the U.S. was reluctant to intervene militarily in South America, even when disputes involved its strategic interests or when it would have been relatively simple to prevent the outbreak of hostilities. For example, the U.S. showed no inclination to intervene authoritatively and prevent the outbreak of hostilities between El Salvador and Honduras in the Soccer War of 1969 and between the United Kingdom and Argentina in the South Atlantic in 1982. In neither case did the U.S. choose to coerce the belligerents to sue for peace and avoid war at all costs. This is circumstantial evidence that, despite what some experts claim as the direct responsibility of the U.S. to maintain intra-regional peace in South America, the role of the U.S. in this endeavor is tenuous and inconclusive. This study demonstrates that the absence of major wars in South America since 1935 is not a direct result of U.S. hegemonic management.

The causal relation between U.S. hegemony and intra-regional, interstate peace in South America appears even weaker when we compare the frequency of U.S. political and military interventions in this region and in other major world regions. As demonstrated above, since late in the nineteenth century the U.S. has been active in promoting peace and security in South America as a way to advance its global strategic objectives by preventing involvement opportunities to other Great Power rivals. Such a goal has guided U.S. foreign policy, particularly since 1945, in every other major region of the world from Africa to the Middle East. Specifically in South America, the U.S. sought

that objective through a combination of diplomatic and covert political involvements in all intra-regional conflicts and militarized disputes. The evidence shows that, since 1935, the U.S. intervened politically and militarily more frequently and with greater force in interstate conflicts and militarized disputes in Africa, Asia, Central America, the Caribbean basin, and the Middle East than in South America. Yet, these other regions experienced more intra-regional, interstate violence since 1935 than South America. Clearly, this is another piece of evidence that debunks the hegemonic peace hypothesis. As is evident from Table 1, the U.S. intervened abroad militarily thirty times: thirteen times in Asia, eight times in the Middle East, including the 2003 Iraq war, seven times in the Central American-Caribbean basin regions, twice in Europe, including the 1996 Bosnian war, and three times in Africa. While most of these U.S. military interventions did not aim to preserve intra-regional, interstate peace in other regions, the much greater degree of U.S. military muscle-flexing in regions other than South America renders, at least, as exaggerated, if not preposterous, the claim that the South American peace is the direct consequence of U.S. hegemonic management.

Table 1 United States Overt Military Interventions Abroad, 1945-1991

Target Territory	Beginning	Ending	Name of Intervention
South Korea	09/08/45	08/15/48	Korean Occupation
P. Rep. of China	09/30/45	09/06/46	American Guard Duties
South Korea	06/27/50	07/27/53	Korean War
North Korea	06/30/50	07/27/53	Korean War
Trieste	11/06/53	11/06/53	Trieste Riots
Republic of China	02/07/55	02/11/55	Tachens Evacuation
Lebanon	07/15/58	10/25/58	Lebanese Civil War
Panama Canal Zone	11/03/59	11/30/59	Panama Demonstrations
South Vietnam	03/22/62	01/27/73	Vietnamese War
South Korea	07/29/63	11/03/63	Korean Conflict
Panama	01/09/64	01/16/64	Panama Flag Riots
Laos	06/08/64	08/15/73	Vietnamese Civil War
North Vietnam	08/04/64	01/27/73	Vietnamese Civil War
Dominican Republic	04/28/65	09/21/66	Dominican Republic Civil War
South Korea	11/18/65	10/18/69	Korean Conflict
Cambodia	09/20/66	08/15/73	Vietnamese War

South Vietnam	04/28/75	04/29/75	Saigon Evacuations
Vietnam	05/14/75	05/15/75	Mayaguez Incident
Iran	04/24/80	04/25/80	Tehran Rescue Mission
Lebanon	08/25/82	03/26/84	Multilateral Force
Grenada	10/25/83	12/15/83	Operation Urgent Fury
Libya	03/24/86	04/15/86	Libya Raids
Virgin Islands	09/21/89	10/31/89	St. Croix Disaster
Panama	12/20/89	04/30/90	Panama Invasion
Kuwait	01/17/90	02/28/91	Gulf War
Liberia	08/05/90	08/19/90	Monrovia Evacuation
Panama	12/05/90	12/05/90	Herrera's Mutiny
Somalia	01/05/91	01/05/91	Somalia Evacuation
Iraq	01/17/91	07/15/91	Desert Storm
Saudi Arabia	01/29/91	01/30/91	Khafji Defense

Source: Herbert K. Tillema, "Foreign Overt Military Interventions, September 2, 1945-December 31, 1991" Department of Political Science, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO, 31 March 1997.

Endnotes

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