The United States, the New World Order, and Implications for Latin America and the Caribbean

Jacqueline Anne Braveboy-Wagner
United Nations Institute for Training and Research/The Graduate School and University Center of CUNY

Introduction: The New World Order

In his book Sea Changes: American Foreign Policy in a World Transformed, Nicholas Rizopoulous refers to a cartoon by James Borgman published in the Cincinnati Enquirer. The cartoon "showed a bemused President Bush, sitting at his desk in the Oval Office, looking at his watch and thinking: "Communism is dead, the Wall is down, Apartheid is falling, Mandela is free, the Sandinistas are ousted, Germany is reuniting, the Cold War is over, I've returned all my calls, and, heck, it's not even lunchtime!" (Rizopoulous, 1990: 1). Surely this cartoon is a succinct reflection of the extent to which the world has changed in the last few years. The bipolar world with its forced stability has crumbled rapidly since 1989, and today international relations specialists are still speculating as to what will replace it. Initially, some specialists saw a return to a (modified) balance-of-power structure such as the one that characterized the international system between 1815 and 1914. In a way, yes, the current system appears to be similar: To be sure, that balance-of-power system was based on military and diplomatic might and was a purely political concoction; today's system is based on economic as much as military power but the similarity rests in the management of power by a few nations, five or six in 1815-1914, and a few more, including China, in this current period. Indeed, the predominant place given to the five Great Powers in the Security Council of the United Nations reflected this balance-of-power mentality, and the reemergence of Great Power consensus in managing conflict, demonstrated in the Iraqi conflict, supports the case for the
return to some kind of balance-of-power system. But the nineteenth
century balance-of-power system was devised as a way for the great
powers to check one another's power, and there is no sense of that
kind of competition and rivalry today. Instead power management
since World War II has been seen primarily in terms of controlling
non-Great Power conflicts, and that has not changed in the
post-Cold War era.

Most analysts have instead reflected on emergence of a
multipolar system, a system that was viewed as incipient in the
1970s, given the strength of China and Japan and the increased
visibility of the Third World. But throughout the Cold War era,
into the 1980s, the world remained dominated by two superpowers
and therefore incipient multipolarity was really manifested as
bi-multipolarity. Now there is a chance, analysts believe, for
true multipolarity. Multipolarity is based not just on military
power but on other characteristics as well, especially economics.
Power is diffused throughout the system, and various poles of
power (states or groups of states) are "capable of influencing the
outcome of major international events" (Jones, 1985: 294-295). By
this definition the world is not yet multipolar but there are
certainly signs of a generalized diffusion of power. This is how
one analyst views the new order:

The world after the Cold War will not resemble any world of the
past. From a "structural" point of view—the distribution of
capabilities—it will be multipolar. But the poles will have
different currencies of power—military (the Soviets), economic
and financial (Japan and Germany), demographic (China and India),
military and economic (United States)—and different
productivities of power—demographic power is more a liability
that an asset, the utility of military might is reduced, only
economic power is fully useful because it is the capacity to
influence others by bringing them the very goods they crave.
Moreover, each of these poles will be, at least to some extent, mired in a world economy that limits its freedom of action. The fate of this new world will depend on the ability of the "poles" to cooperate enough in order to prevent or moderate conflicts, including regional ones, and to correct those imbalances of the world economy that would otherwise induce some states, or their publics, to pull away from or to disrupt the momentum of interdependence (Hoffman, 1990: 291).

Put more simply by one journalist,

In addition to traditional power politics, something more is emerging as the ideologically driven East-West competition wanes. Moral concerns like human rights could take on new force, while the environment, terrorism, drugs and above all economics rise as factors in international relations. In the days when power depended on who had the biggest army and navy, it was easy to identify which country was predominant. Today, a country's balance of trade is becoming as important an indicator of its status as its place in the balance of power (Friedman, 1989).

After the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq and the U.S.-dominated Allied response, international relations analysts turned their attention to defining the new unipolar world. Multipolarity was dismissed: "Now is the unipolar moment," states one analyst, "There is today no lack of second-rank powers. Germany and Japan are economic dynamos. Britain and France can deploy diplomatic and to some extent military assets. The Soviet Union possesses several elements of power—military, diplomatic, and political—but all are in rapid decline. There is but one first-rate power and no prospect in the immediate future of any power to rival it" (Krauthammer, 1991: 24).

According to Richard Spielman, "It took the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait to reveal what should have been obvious all along to foreign policy experts: The bipolar, cold war world has given way not to 'multipolarity' but to 'unipolarity,' with the U.S. as the
only pole left" (Spielman, 1990). Indeed, there can be no argument that the United States emerged from the Gulf War the strongest and most important power in the world. And in order to understand the position of the weaker states of the world in this new international order, we need to dwell a little longer on this issue of unipolarity. Specifically, we must ask: What is the nature of unipolarity today? Does it imply hegemony/imperialism or something more amiable? Is there any check on unipolarity today? Does it imply a continuing role for the U.S. as sole "world policeman"? It is in answering these questions that analysts can better project what the effect of the new order will be on Third World states. In this paper, the particular concern is with the effect of the new order on Latin American and Caribbean states.

Unipolarity: Hegemony or No?

For the smaller states of the world, the real issue is whether Pax Americana is benign or imperialistic. Actually, U.S. policymakers do not refer at all to unipolarity or "Pax Americana." They focus instead on the "New Order." President Bush is committed to establishing this "new world order" in which "nations recognize the shared responsibility for freedom and justice" (Silk, 1991). The exact role of the United States within this new order is still not clear: the country, though powerful, is not as powerful or economically strong today as it was after World War II when it played the major part in reconstructing Europe and Japan. Leonard Silk poses some important questions: "Faced with ... a range of economic, political and military
problems, can the United States continue to play the role of
leader of the "free world'? Or has its power to lead been
seriously weakened by its relative economic decline or its own
lack of fiscal discipline?" (Ibid.)

Silk points to the two schools of thought among academics on
the leadership capabilities of the United States. One school, led
by Paul Kennedy (The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers, 1987)
thinks that America is suffering from the old imperialist malady:
decline brought about by overstretching in search of global
dominance. The other school, led by Joseph S. Nye (Bound to Lead,
1990) "contends that the United States still possesses economic,
scientific, technological and even moral qualities that have
resulted in its emergence as the only global power that remains
crucial to the maintenance of world peace and prosperity" (Silk,
1991). The Gulf War has certainly given this school of thought a
boost. Those who exult in "pax americana" implicitly believe that
the United States has the capabilities to impose a new order. As
Muravchik asserts: "Soviet power has imploded and a bipolar world
has become unipolar. A global rush toward democracy and free
markets has spelled a huge victory for America on the ideological
plain. Now, in the gulf war, our ideological supremacy is being
matched by a demonstration of America's refurbished military
capability" (Muravchik, 1991).

Mention can be made here also of the fact that the Gulf War
marked an end to the "Vietnam syndrome," that is, the wariness of
segments of the American public about large-scale interventions in
far-flung Third World countries. Psychologically, the barriers to
a militarily-active U.S. policy were removed, although many
thinking Americans still have doubts about the necessity and wisdom of the U.S. action against Iraq. As discussed later, however, the age-old debate between isolationists and interventionists has also been revived.

All those who favor America's global dominance at the same time hasten to add that U.S. dominance does not mean "hegemony." Spielman declares: "A unipolar world is not the same as a hierarchical system dominated by a single power that creates the rules as well as enforces them. The European values that the U.S. endorses predate our existence and limit our imperial ambitions. We still live in an anarchic international order--one lacking an overarching government--although there is only one pole left" (Spielman, 1990). Doubtless, Latin Americans will question Spielman's assessment of the limits to U.S. imperialism!

Muravchik, a scholar at the conservative American Enterprise Institute, also hastens to say that:

America's rediscovered prowess will not be used for conquest but to deter others from conquest: to secure the "new world order" that has been the goal of American policy since President Woodrow Wilson. In addition, it will strengthen the attraction of America's political and economic system.

This Pax Americana will not rest on domination but on persuasion and example as well as power. It will consist not of empire but of having won over a large and growing part of the world not only to the joys of jeans and rock and Big Macs but also to our concept of how nations ought to be governed and behave (Muravchik, 1991).

Again, there are sentiments that might give some pause to Latin Americanists who recall Woodrow Wilson's determination to "teach the South Americans to elect good men."
The Kennedy school has a more moderate view of America's appropriate role. Today most analysts cite economic constraints as limiting U.S. involvement abroad. Leonard Silk notes that the United States is "perhaps the first modern world leader to have waged a war with so little money of its own and such big budget deficits" (Silk, 1991). Krauthammer comes down on the side of "foreign entanglements" (the "cost of ensuring an open and safe world for American commerce") but agrees that the "spectacle of secretaries of state and treasury flying around the world rattling tin cups to support America's Persian Gulf deployment exposed the imbalance between America's geopolitical reach and its resources" (Krauthammer, 1991: 26, 27). Charles William Maynes, editor of Foreign Policy, asserts that "The state of the American treasury will not permit the United States to play such a role [as it has played in Iraq]" in future (Maynes, 1991: 161). Maynes adds that Americans are eyeing the "peace dividend" (recycling of monies from the military to social and economic programs) and are unlikely to support more ventures based on what will seem "an abstract and unattainable principle."

There are a number of other considerations as well that lead analysts, at least in the United States, to conclude that the U.S. role in the Gulf crisis is unlikely to be repeated. Internally, there is the revival of the debate between isolationists and interventionists. Isolationists have traditionally wanted U.S. foreign policy defined in terms of narrow national interests and now that the Cold War is over want a retraction of America's military reach. They have shared similar sentiments with realists such as Hans Morgenthau and Walter Lippmann who disagreed with
President Truman's containment policy (Morgenthau, 1950; Lippmann, 1947). In fact, a column appearing in the *Washington Post* during the Gulf crisis focused on how Lippmann might have seen the crisis and concluded that he would recommend reliance on sanctions, defensive military measures, and patient diplomacy (Geyelin, 1991). And Krauthammer cites Jeane Kirkpatrick's recent (but pre-Gulf) admonition that "It is time to give up the dubious benefits of superpower status .. time to give up the 'unusual burdens' of the past ... and take care of pressing problems of education, family, industry and technology" at home (Krauthammer, p. 29; Kirkpatrick, 1990: 40-44). On the other hand, interventionists or internationalists today correspond to American neoconservatives. "They want the United States to lead a crusade for global democracy little different in inspiration from the Fourteen Points of Woodrow Wilson, or the Atlantic Charter, or the United Nations as originally envisaged by Franklin Roosevelt and his associates (Pfaff, 1991: 45). Overall, analysts conclude that domestic support for foreign adventures is divided and still not strong, the Gulf success notwithstanding.

Other constraints on American global action include uncertainty that support would be forthcoming from allies, and U.S. declining security interests around the world. With respect to the first, in the Gulf crisis, the United States was able to command the support of Europe, Japan, and the Arab states, among others. This, according to Pfaff, writing during the Gulf crisis, has led some U.S. policymakers to view the Gulf crisis response as a model for future U.S. global activism. But, he asserts:
This vision of a new international order led by the United States presumes that the United Nations' opinions will prove consistent with American opinion, so that enforcing the U.N. judgments would be acceptable to the American public. There seems little reason to expect this to be so. Certainly one cannot expect it to be so consistently. For four decades the United States has opposed U.N. majority opinion on Israel, terrorism, other matters of Third World interest, and on its own policies in Vietnam, Grenada, Panama and so on. ... [Nationalist] Washington would certainly expect to lead any new "world order," whether organized under U.N. auspices or otherwise.

And this, surely, is not in the long run a realistic expectation. There was much reluctance in Europe, not to mention Japan ... to follow the United States into the gulf. The [Gulf] affair is seen by the allies as another American adventure they are compelled by Western solidarity to support, but about which they are deeply apprehensive. It seems unlikely to prove a successful model for the future of international cooperation (Pfaff, 1991: 43-44).

Note that even those who are skeptical about the need of the United States for any collective security partners admit that American opinion "doubts the legitimacy of unilateral American action but accepts quite readily actions undertaken by the 'world community' acting in concert" (Krauthammer, pp. 25-26).

Finally, there is the issue of American redefinition of its security interests. During the Cold War, the United States was involved in conflicts around the globe simply because its overarching security goal was to contain communism. Regions and countries that were traditionally marginal to U.S. concerns suddenly became important. The Persian Gulf war has been seen by some in terms of a redefinition of American security goals so as to substitute the abstract principle of international order for the former goal of anti-communism. Indeed, as stated earlier, President Bush has put international freedom and justice on the top of the foreign policy agenda. However, it is unrealistic to expect that the United States will intervene all over the world to
preserve order. As Maynes puts it, "Unless he had clear congressional support for such a crusade (and that seems unattainable), the next U.S. president to incur significant casualties in the name of world order would risk impeachment" (Maynes, 1991: 161).

Mandlebaum asserts that although the United States sent forces into the Gulf both to support the principle of non-intervention against small states and to protect the world's oil supply, more wars in support of small states are unlikely. "Oil is a uniquely valuable resource, one that makes the Persian Gulf the only part of the Third World where Western interests are sizable enough to justify a large war" (Mandelbaum, 1991: 11).

In sum, the evidence suggests that there are curbs on global one-power rule, both from within the one dominant power and from without (the need of the United States to garner international support, especially international financial support, for global adventures). Seen in this light, the world is now uni-multipolar, with one major pole of power but many other important secondary actors that may even play primary roles on some issues, particularly global economic issues. And clearly, if the United States economy continues to decline proportional to other countries, then what Krauthammer calls the "unipolar moment" will not last too long. To quote Silk, Mr. Bush's quest for "enduring peace" is in jeopardy so long as the U.S. "economy, social structure, education system and infrastructure deteriorate," not to mention the problems of continuing poverty in the Third World (Silk, 1991).
The Future U.S. Agenda

Given what has already been said, what projections can be made about the U.S. foreign policy agenda in the era of the New Order? Paul H. Nitze, the U.S. arms control negotiator, articulated a strategy that appears to be similar to the as-yet-unformalized strategy of President Bush. The key elements of his proposal have been explained by Silk (1991) as follows:

1. The "accommodation and protection of diversity within a general framework of a required order." This implies an acceptance of very different ideological groupings and a willingness to defend them against outside aggressors. A corollary ... would be to protect the right of each group ... to self-determination.

2. Significant reliance on supranational institutions such as the United Nations, to deal with problems that transcend national or ethnic interests, such as drug trafficking, terrorism or environmental concerns.

3. The United States, "with its first-class military potential, inherent political, economic and cultural strengths, and no territorial or ideological ambitions, can play a unique role" in such a world "in bringing its latent power to the support of order and diversity among diffuse and varied groupings."

This is an interesting strategy in theory but in reality it would be very selectively operationalized. The promotion of self-determination has been a major part of the U.S. foreign policy agenda at least since the end of World War I, but there have always been, and continue to be, limits to U.S. willingness to defend the principle (for example, the Palestine question). Again, U.S. tolerance of ideological diversity has been notoriously weak and there is no reason to expect that self-interest will take a back seat to protection of the global order in the new era. The global order is more likely to be
defined in terms of the U.S. order than any genuine international consensus on the subject. And multilateralism, while surely on the rise, is on the rise only because the United States is "calling the shots." The United States can afford to defer to so-called supranational organizations only because it is assured that its views will be dominant. Or, as Krauthammer puts it bluntly,

There is a sharp distinction to be drawn between real and apparent multilateralism. True multilateralism involves a genuine coalition of coequal partners of comparable strength and stature -- the World War II Big Three coalition, for example. What we have today is pseudo-multilateralism: a dominant power acts essentially alone, but, embarrassed at the idea and still worshipping at the shrine of collective security, recruits a ship here, a brigade there, and blessings all around to give its unilateral actions a multilateral sheen (Krauthammer, 1991: 25).

What is true of the Persian Gulf is also true of the general attitude of the United States towards the United Nations and other multilateral forums. (Nevertheless, in the post-Cold War era, at least for the time being, there has been a new cooperative international climate that justifies some optimism about the role of international organizations.)

What can be expected of the United States is a rhetorical commitment to the preservation of global order, backed up by very limited-to-strong action depending on the importance of the issue (and the countries involved) to U.S. self-interest. Pragmatism (expediency) in foreign policy has been the norm for the United States and that is not expected to change. This means that certainly the United States will maintain a strong military interest in the (oil resources of the) Persian Gulf, and, as Mandelbaum recommends, the Soviet Union, Europe, and East Asia
(Mandelbaum, 1991: 12), although military commitments in those areas are expected to be much-reduced. The situation with respect to Latin America is discussed in the next section.

The security commitments retained by the United States will be based on traditional power considerations (preservation of regional balances of power; filling various power vacuums). Also, in view of its own domestic limitations, the United States is likely to lend support to regional security groupings rather than be directly involved in military commitments of its own. Another rationale for U.S. security involvement in the post-Cold War era could be the need to protect and preserve the democratic advance. But most analysts agree that there is very little that the United States can do politically to promote democracy in a post-Cold War world: the impetus here has to come from within countries. (China and Saudi Arabia are examples of countries that are important to the United States but not open to U.S. machinations in favor of democracy. Kuwait was liberated by American forces but the United States cannot force it to liberalize its political system.) Human rights prodding can be effective in this respect, but the United States has historically been very uneven in its application of pressure on behalf of these rights (the treatment of China being the most recent case) and is not expected to suddenly develop a finely-tuned sensitivity in the new international order.

Instead of political and moral prodding towards democracy, many U.S. analysts favor the promotion of capitalism as a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy. According to Mandelbaum, "The promotion of market practices ... indirectly fosters democracy ... [by] restrict[ing] the power of the state ... [and] expand[ing]
the political space available to the individual.... [A]s the old saying goes, "free markets make free men" (Mandelbaum, 1991: 16). Mandelbaum adds, correctly, that in today's era, there are more varied sources of capital and other assistance than in the post-World War II era, and that the U.S. role should include providing leadership in the multilateral economic institutions, debt relief, and access to markets as well as solving its own chronic deficit problem (Mandelbaum, pp. 17-20).

Implications for Latin America and the Caribbean

There are two schools of thought with respect to the place of Latin America within the new world order. One school is influenced by the diversion of U.S. attention to Eastern Europe and the Middle East and the decline in strategic interest in Latin America, given the end of the Cold War. Mark Falcoff states quite bluntly:

The old Pan-American idea--the notion that all of the republics of the area are bound together in a kind of mystical alliance based on a supposed political, strategic, or economic community of interests--is currently on its deathbed and cannot be revived. With the exception of Mexico, our [U.S.] relations with individual Latin republics will depend largely upon their own economic viability and their own political choices--we well as how we respond to them. There will be no quasi-imperial (or regional) vision to render rational decisions that could not otherwise be so regarded on their own (narrowly economic) terms.

Geographical propinquity alone will assure that the region does not quite fall off the map of U.S. consciousness, particularly as regards Central America and the Caribbean. But awareness of a region does not mean a willingness to become actively engaged with its problems, much less to expend resources. What is certain is that no new issue, or combination of issues, is likely to engage the United States in South America with the force of the investments-and-security package of times past (Falcoff, 1990: 82).
Ironically, this conservative view arrives at similar conclusions as the liberal "hegemonic decline" school, in vogue since the 1970s (for example, see Lowenthal, 1976 and, of course, the more recent work of Paul Kennedy already cited). Their thesis was (is) that the United States, having overstretched its imperial reach, had (has) entered a period of decline and could not afford military adventures around the world, including in Latin America. The Latin American proponents of hegemonic decline were premature in their analysis, as shown by events in Grenada and, again, in Panama. But the new global rephrasing of the U.S. dilemma is relevant to Latin America: Notwithstanding America's response in the Persian Gulf, there are today limits to U.S. capacity to be the world's policeman. As stated earlier, given these limits, United States involvement anywhere in the world will depend on the strategic (economic and political) importance of that country/region to U.S. foreign policy. Latin America, removed now from its Cold War security niche, will have to find other ways to attract the attention of the United States. Unfortunately, as Falcoff notes, the economic importance of the region to the United States has declined over the years (Mexico is the exception) and newer issues of drugs, the environment, debt and immigration are not "important enough to command significant economic resources and lead to a major deployment of policy energies in the United States" (Falcoff, p. 79).

The pessimistic school can also easily review the history of U.S. foreign policy towards Latin America and the Caribbean, noting that, even during the Cold War era, the United States has neglected Latin America and the Caribbean unless major security
problems are perceived. Only limited economic assistance was forthcoming from the United States in the 1950s, and again during the Nixon era, Latin America suffered from benign neglect. In the 1960s and late 1970s-1980s, neglect was replaced by attention only because of U.S. concerns about Cuban expansionism. In the post-Cold War world, communism has lost its attraction in most places around the world, including Latin America and the Caribbean. Cuba therefore is no longer a major U.S. "problem," especially in view of its preoccupation with domestic economic issues, given the reduced assistance coming from the Soviet Union. All of this reinforces the pessimistic viewpoint that U.S. relations with Latin America and the Caribbean in the new order will be at best low-key.

But there is another view that has not been articulated as much as the above thesis.: that the relationship between the United States and Latin America is unique and not likely to fade soon. Says Georges Fauriol, "If nothing else the strong Latin American component in U.S. society and the growing Latin Americanization in the rest of the hemisphere are powerful ingredients that are likely to expand rather than decline in years to come" (Fauriol, 1990: 132). Other practical reasons for the continuing relationship include the fact that Latin American economic recovery has more direct benefits for the United States than Eastern European recovery. U.S. policymakers involved in decisions on Latin America also reinforce this thinking by pointing to U.S. continuing efforts to promote peace in Central America, to combat the drug problem in Latin America, to assist
social development, to encourage environmentally-conscious development, and above all to promote free trade.¹

In a world in which economic issues are beginning to take center stage, U.S. foreign policy towards Latin America and the Caribbean is being redefined away from the ideological concerns of the 1970s and 1980s and towards a new sense of economic commonality. One of the characteristics of the New Order is the emergence of a global economy based on free trade. The new overarching element that so far has been articulated by the United States with respect to its relationship with the hemisphere is economic: the vision of a hemispheric free trade area (proposed in the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative) that would boost American economic strength while preserving some sense of the special U.S. relationship with Latin America and the Caribbean. The difference, however, between this era and others is that the United States--Latin American relationship is no longer symbiotic in an generalized sense. Rather, individual countries will get much more attention than others. Mexico has already been mentioned as crucial because of its proximity to the United States and importance to U.S. trade. Venezuela (which increased its oil exports at the request of the United States during the Persian Gulf crisis) could also play a major role in the U.S. perception. Other countries, particularly smaller ones, will have a harder time attracting American attention and the benefits of that attention. (Nicaragua and Panama are already disappointed with the level of American economic assistance, now that they no longer attract security attention.)
In sum, for Latin America and the Caribbean, the New Order will not mean the end of its unique relationship with the United States, as the more pessimistic analysts assert. However, the new U.S. vision for Latin America, if it remains articulated in primarily economic terms, will contain highly unequal benefits for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. There will also be increased pressure on countries to conform to U.S. economic demands as Latin America and the Caribbean compete for U.S. capital.

But what about the security relationship between the United States and Latin America and the Caribbean? What (if any) are the implications of the Persian Gulf crisis, and also the new unipolar order, for this relationship? Latin American/Caribbean countries are probably most interested in the response to two questions: Will unipolarity reinforce the U.S. historic tendency to intervene in the hemisphere for its own ends (political and economic/social)? And, on the other hand, is the U.S. response to the Gulf crisis indicative of its commitment to the goal of protecting small states, not necessarily around the globe but certainly in a region with which it has a unique relationship?

In terms of the use of massive military force, clearly the earlier analysis has supported the conclusion (with which I agree) that the United States' response in the Persian Gulf is unlikely to be repeated. As far as Latin America and the Caribbean are concerned, U.S. interventions in the pre-Cold War era were undertaken in the name of political stability and economic benefit, and thus it might be tempting to conclude that similar interventions could occur in future, notwithstanding the removal
of the communist threat. But the global system has changed dramatically since the early twentieth century: The principle of state sovereignty has been strongly affirmed and there is an international community that acts to censure violators (since violations do occur); there are ways in which powerful countries, the United States in particular, can influence smaller ones to do their bidding, short of resorting to force; and most of all, as already noted, Latin America has declined in importance to the United States. It is hard to imagine a post-Cold War controversy that would lead the United States to stage a large-scale intervention in the region. Even during the Cold War, there were only two outright military interventions by U.S. forces (Dominican Republic and Grenada) and while these were two too many for Latin Americans, the Grenada intervention, at least, arose from an exceptionally rare combination of circumstances.

The invasion of Panama (1989), in the view of some analysts, negates the above conclusion. The invasion had nothing to do with the Cold War and smacked of a return to the traditional prewar days of U.S. intervention to preserve order. The rationale for the invasion remains muddled but included drug interdiction, protection of U.S. nationals, and restoration of democracy in view of an earlier aborted attempt at free and fair elections. But How likely is such an event to occur in future? Falcoff is of the opinion that the "use of military force to depose General Manual Noriega was an unexpected episode, but it should not be allowed to confuse the longer-term trends."

The real reason for "Operation Just Cause" was the presence of a residual American military community in the Zone, threatened
by armed mobs—that, and the need to have a Panamanian government that would cooperate in the continuing devolution of the canal. With the consummation of the Carter-Torrijos treaties ten years hence, there will be no Americans there, no Zone, and hence no basis for U.S. concern about the internal workings of Panamanian politics, much less about the quality of the leaders Panamanians themselves may have occasion to forward (Falcoff, 1990: 76).

It is not necessary to agree that without the Zone the United States will have no interest in Panama. And it is significant that Falcoff does not mention the matter of drug interdiction that featured prominently as an explanation given to the American public. But certainly the United States has not normally (in the postwar period) seen fit to invade countries simply to promote democracy or to remove leaders (if that were the case, Haiti would have been invaded by now), and it is unlikely to intervene just to further the social-policy goals of the new era (drugs, environment etc.)

All this does not mean that the United States will have no security interest in Latin America and the Caribbean in the coming years or will not intervene in non-military ways. Issues of immigration, drug trafficking and social stability currently rank quite high on the U.S. agenda insofar as the region is concerned. The U.S. will also be eager to promote capitalism and further democratization of the region. But, Panama notwithstanding, the strategies used to achieve these goals will continue to be primarily economic inducements and financial withholding—particularly effective strategies in an era of global demands for scarce capital. Insofar as social stability is concerned, the United States will prefer to rely on national governments and regional arrangements to keep the peace but it is likely to
continue to provide military support to friendly governments that ask for it, not for reasons of vital interest but because of the residual special relationship with the hemisphere and to reinforce its abstract commitment to global and regional order.

From the U.S. point of view, the Gulf War was particularly significant in sending a message to stronger countries that they must not swallow up weaker neighbors. Mandelbaum concludes that "the principle of sovereign independence is important. Where it is challenged in the years ahead the United States will surely support beleaguered small states -- but not by sending 400,000 troops to liberate them" (Mandelbaum, 1991: 11). As mentioned earlier, the extent to which U.S. help would be forthcoming to beleaguered small states would depend on the strategic value of these states (economically and politically). Central American proximity to and dependence on the United States would surely assure those small states U.S. help in case of major territorial violations. But more limited assistance could be expected for the smaller English-speaking states, whose territorial machinations would appear to be less significant to U.S. policymakers. In fact, the United States would probably be inclined in such cases to take a back seat to regional and sub-regional powers. Which leads me to add that the new world order and the Gulf war do not offer any answers to the question of what role the United States would play in cases where the aggressor is a friendly and valuable ally. If, for example, Venezuela were to invade part of Guyana, the U.S. response would be considerably more measured than its response in the gulf or in conceivable comparable cases!
In sum, while the United States will continue to regard Latin America and the Caribbean as special friends in the New World Order, the character of this special relationship will change to some extent.

1. There will be (already is) more emphasis placed on economic rather than security linkages and despite special programs such as the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative, many Latin America and Caribbean states will not be able to attract U.S. economic assistance in an era of competing demands from countries around the globe. To attract the attention of the United States, Latin American and Caribbean countries, especially the less strategically important states, will be more pliant and accommodating to the United States than they have been in the not-too-distant past. A premium will be paid on friendliness with the United States.

2. The United States retains a residual security interest in the region, particularly in the Central American and Caribbean region. Considerations of order and social stability define this interest, as well as newer issues of drugs, immigration and the environment. Direct American military intervention in these regions are unlikely because these security interests are not important enough. Under the new unipolar order, U.S. economic strategies will be sufficient to assure compliance or compromise on crucial social and economic issues. Concerns about stability are likely to be addressed by reliance on national and regional security arrangements, but the United States will support these with limited to moderate military commitments if necessary. The United States in the new era will be neither protector nor antagonist.
Rather it will be a business-like pragmatist, expecting quid pro quos for any role it might assume on behalf of individual nations and the various sub-regions.

NOTES

1. These were cited by Bernard Aronson, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, at the 26th International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, Washington D.C., April 5, 1991.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


