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Reincarnation of the good neighbor : Nixon and the creation of Latin American policy

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2015

Date

2015-05

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Abstract

Much of the research on President Richard Nixon and his Latin American policy offers an overly simplistic portrayal of his attitudes and policies toward Latin America. This report explores the creation of President Richard Nixon's Latin American policy in the first year of his administration. After a brief overview of key events early in the administration, such as the U.S. government's response to the brief war between El Salvador and Honduras known colloquially as the "Soccer War", the body of the report will explore two discrete events. The first event was the ill-fated Operation Intercept, an attempt by the Nixon administration to stem the flow of marijuana across the Mexican border. Operation Intercept, the largest peacetime search and seizure operation in U.S. history up to that point, highlighted many of the sources of friction between U.S. government agencies. Additionally, the operation provides an example of the growing importance of the NSC in government decision making and the ability of the Nixon administration to learn from past mistakes. This incident also provides an example of the agency of the Mexican government, the other half of the foreign policy equation. The other event this report will highlight is Nixon's one major speech on Latin America, which he gave on October 31, 1969. This speech was the culmination of almost a year's worth of events, meetings, and reports that morphed into the White House's strategic vision toward the region. This report concludes with a comparison of Nixon and Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Latin American policies. Both president's approaches were remarkably similar in substance including an increased focus on hemispheric trade and close relations with unsavory dictators that advanced U.S. interests. The differences in policy outcomes were ultimately due to changing cultures in both the United States and Latin America, but also to fundamental differences in how both men approached the presidency.

Department

History

Description

text

Subject

Nixon
Latin America
FDR
Good neighbor
Operation Intercept
Nelson Rockefeller
OAS

URI

http://hdl.handle.net/2152/32360

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Hoover pioneers the Good Neighbor Policy. Because of the global depression, the US was more lenient toward Latin American countries' indebtedness. Also, the lack of loose money made dollar diplomacy less and less attractive. Hoover also pulled out of Haiti and Nicaragua, laying the foundations of the Good Neighbor for FDR to build upon. Ch. FDR "would dedicate this nation to the policy of the Good Neighbor" Tired of the negative feelings that welled up from the Latin American nations due to the United States' interventionary policies, FDR decided to stop the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine and dollar diplomacy, and in late 1933 he formally endorsed non-intervention at the Seventh Pan-American Conference. This report explores the creation of President Richard Nixon's Latin American policy in the first year of his administration. After a brief overview of key events early in the administration, such as the U.S. government's response to the brief war between El Salvador and Honduras known colloquially as the "Soccer War", the body of the report will explore two discrete events. Additionally, the operation provides an example of the growing importance of the NSC in government decision making and the ability of the Nixon administration to learn from past mistakes. This incident also provides an example of the agency of the Mexican government, the other half of the foreign policy equation. President Nixon had an extraordinarily successful first term, best known for his foreign affairs triumphs: opening trade with China, leading Soviet détente and the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, ending the Vietnam War with the Paris Peace Accords, and reestablishing American influence in the Middle East, including saving Israel in the Yom Kippur War. Creation of the Watergate Special Prosecution Force. Edward Kennedy and his colleagues on the Senate Judiciary Committee demanded the appointment of a special prosecutor as a condition of confirming Elliot Richardson as Nixon's new Attorney General in 1973. They also demanded that the special prosecutor operate with complete independence from the Department of Justice.