

## The Latin American Missile Crisis\*

On October 23, 1962, members of the Council of the Organization of American States (OAS) held an emergency meeting in Washington to discuss John F. Kennedy's revelation of Soviet missiles in Cuba. Kennedy's Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, addressed the gathering, warning the representatives of the countries of Latin America that "these new weapons arriving in Cuba are not only directed against the United States . . . There are other strategic targets in this hemisphere—in your countries—which they can devastate with their lethal loads."<sup>1</sup> By the end of the meeting, the OAS had unanimously approved a resolution demanding the immediate dismantling and removal from Cuba of all missiles and other weapons with offensive capability. Furthermore, the resolution recommended that the member states "take all measures, individually and collectively, including the use of armed force, which they may deem necessary to ensure that the Government of Cuba cannot continue to receive from the Sino-Soviet powers military material and related supplies which may threaten the peace and security of the continent."<sup>2</sup> In effect, the resolution provided justification for an attempt by any member state to remove the missile bases and could be interpreted as hemispheric approval of an invasion of Cuba. The secretary-general of the OAS, José A. Mora, later confirmed at a news conference that any measures taken to dismantle the bases would be "multilateral measures, with multilateral support."<sup>3</sup>

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\*I would like to thank Bruce Schulman, whose invitation to speak at Boston University's Landmarks Lecture Series inspired this line of inquiry. The Kluge Center at the Library of Congress, the Social Science Research Council, the University of Texas, and Boston University all provided generous funding. I am also grateful to Jonathan Brown, Thomas C. Field Jr., Jonathan Hunt, Aragorn Storm Miller, David Scott Palmer, Claudia Rueda, Cameron Strang, Jeffrey F. Taffet, and the two anonymous reviewers from *Diplomatic History* for their comments on earlier versions of this article.

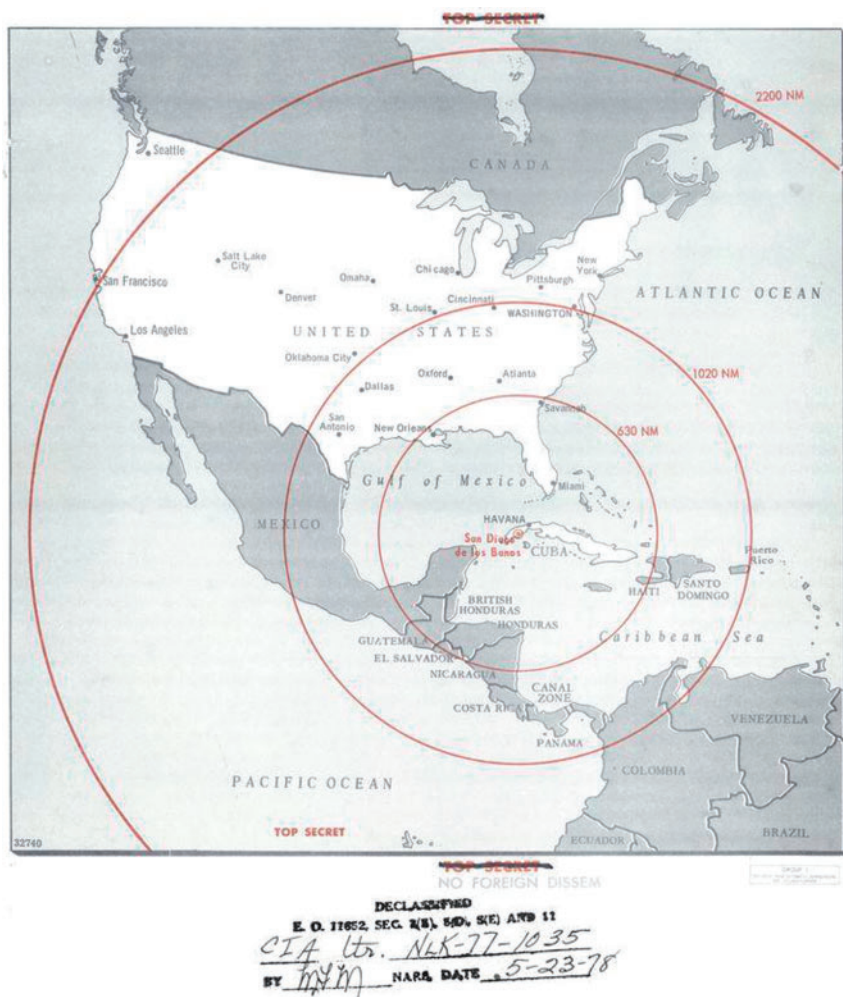
1. "Organization of American States Press Release: Address of the Honorable Dean Rusk, United States Secretary of State to the Special Meeting of the Council of the Organization of American States," October 23, 1962, DeLesseps S. Morrison Collection Folder 5, Latin American Library at Tulane University.

2. "Resolution Adopted by the C.O.A.S. Acting Provisionally as the Organ of Consultation on October 23, 1962," October 23, 1962, Morrison Collection Folder 13, Latin American Library at Tulane University; "Rusk Speech and the Resolution Adopted by O.A.S.," *New York Times*, October 24, 1962.

3. "U.S. Thinks Latins Sanction Force: Sees O.A.S. Vote as Giving Right to Dismantle Bases," *New York Times*, October 27, 1962. The Kennedy administration consciously adopted a posture of

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Advance Access publication on March 17, 2014



**Figure 1:** Map of the missile range. Theodore Sorenson Personal Papers, Box 49, Cuba, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library.

This unanimous OAS resolution presented an image of hemispheric solidarity that has elided the variety of Latin American responses from the history of the Cuban Missile Crisis.<sup>4</sup> There were, in fact, many reactions across the hemisphere,

multilateralism in order to justify a blockade or “quarantine” that was, arguably, against the tenets of international law.

4. The few histories that examine the crisis in the wider Latin American context focus on the OAS resolution and depict the hemispheric response as unanimous. Hal Brands, *Latin America's Cold War* (Cambridge, MA, 2010); James G. Hershberg, “The Cuban Missile Crisis,” in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, eds. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, vol. II: Crises

from bellicose saber rattling to ambivalent equivocation to violent protest. Faced with the threat of nuclear war, Latin American politicians, military officers, and citizens did not sit idly by and watch the drama play out on their doorstep. They claimed active roles in the crisis, and their responses had significant results both at home and across the continent. This article takes a pericentric approach to uncover the variety of ways that the missile crisis affected national politics and international relations in the Americas beyond the well-known confrontation between John F. Kennedy, Nikita Khrushchev, and Fidel Castro.<sup>5</sup> It joins what James Hershberg has called the “Third Wave” of scholarship on the Cuban Missile Crisis, contributing to the effort to decenter the historiography and understand the crisis as a truly global event.<sup>6</sup> The global scope of the missile crisis offers a unique opportunity to construct an international and transnational history of one moment across two continents, allowing us to compare the ways that internal and external dynamics combined to create processes of accommodation, negotiation, and contestation.

A closer examination of the hemispheric responses to the missile crisis reveals that Latin American governments and citizens tried to take advantage of this rare moment of U.S. vulnerability to change U.S. relations with Latin America. Political and military leaders in Venezuela and Argentina saw the missile crisis as an opportunity to strengthen their ties with the United States, hoping to gain

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and Détente (Cambridge, 2010), 65–87; Stephen G. Rabe, *The Killing Zone: The United States Wages Cold War in Latin America* (New York, 2012). Two noteworthy exceptions to this trend are the Wilson Center’s Cold War International History Project 50th anniversary *Bulletin* and the two-part article by James G. Hershberg on Brazil’s covert role in the missile crisis. Christian F. Ostermann and James G. Hershberg, eds. “The Global Cuban Missile Crisis at 50: New Evidence from Behind the Iron, Bamboo, and Sugarcane Curtains, and Beyond,” *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 17/18 (2012); James G. Hershberg, “The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962 (Part 1),” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6, no. 2 (2004): 3–20; James G. Hershberg, “The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis (Part 2),” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6, no. 3 (2004): 5–67.

5. Tony Smith, “New Bottles for New Wine: A Pericentric Framework for the Study of the Cold War,” *Diplomatic History* 24, no. 4 (2000): 567–91. The literature on the Cuban Missile Crisis has overwhelmingly focused on the United States, the Soviet Union, and, more recently, Cuba. While it is impossible to capture the breadth of scholarship in one footnote, highlights include Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble: Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958–1964: The Secret History of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York, 1998); Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1999); James G. Blight, Bruce J. Allyn, and David A. Welch, *Cuba on the Brink: Castro, the Missile Crisis, and the Soviet Collapse*, Revised (Lanham, MD, 2002); Michael Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Castro on the Brink of Nuclear War* (New York, 2008); James George Blight and Janet M. Lang, *The Armageddon Letters: Kennedy, Khrushchev, Castro in the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Lanham, MD, 2012).

6. Hershberg, “The Global Cuban Missile Crisis at 50,” 7. In the “first wave,” historians told the story of the crisis predominantly through the lens of U.S. perspectives and sources. A “second wave” began in 1987, when Soviet and Cuban sources started to reshape the conversation. Hershberg’s “third wave” refers to recent efforts to incorporate wider sources and perspectives from the rest of the world.

outside support that they could use against their local critics and competitors.<sup>7</sup> Other countries tried to use the missile crisis to alter U.S. policy toward Cuba: Nicaragua's dictator pushed for more aggression against Castro while Brazil's president called for more engagement and negotiation. At the same time, sentiments of both nationalism and pan-Latin Americanism inspired thousands of Latin American citizens across the hemisphere to seize upon the missile crisis to protest U.S. economic and political imperialism.<sup>8</sup> They argued that Castro had every right to defend his country and directed their anger against political and economic symbols of the U.S. presence in their own countries, including embassies, businesses, and Alliance for Progress exhibits.

While concerns about the United States were paramount, Latin American responses to the missile crisis also depended on domestic and "intermestic" politics.<sup>9</sup> As they did with so many of the other battles of the Cold War, Latin American governments and citizens viewed the international confrontation through the lenses of their own local conflicts.<sup>10</sup> Nicaraguan and Venezuelan leaders who faced armed opposition and guerrilla insurgencies adopted a more belligerent stance, treating the crisis as an opportunity to eliminate Cuban support for domestic opposition. In Mexico, Bolivia, and Brazil, countries with strong leftist movements and revolutionary traditions, national leaders had to take a more ambiguous approach to avoid alienating significant sectors of the population. The missile crisis also widened the political divisions within many countries as deadly riots and street fighting broke out between supporters and opponents of Castro.

The Latin American missile crisis was thus a microcosm of Latin America's Cold War: even at the absolute height of Soviet involvement, Latin American participants were less interested in superpower rivalry and more concerned with domestic politics and inter-American relations. Comparing the politically charged

7. On the role of Latin American elites in encouraging U.S. intervention, see Michael Grow, *U.S. Presidents and Latin American Interventions: Pursuing Regime Change in the Cold War* (Lawrence, KS, 2008).

8. I use the term "Pan-Latin Americanism" to distinguish the popular, anti-U.S. sentiment of regional solidarity from the program of Pan Americanism that the United States has promoted since the nineteenth century. On Pan-Americanism, see Jorge Castañeda, "Pan Americanism and Regionalism: A Mexican View," *International Organization* 10, no. 3 (1956): 373–89; Mark T. Gilderhus, *Pan American Visions: Woodrow Wilson in the Western Hemisphere, 1913–1921* (Tucson, AZ, 1986). On Latin American nationalism, see James Siekmeier, *Aid, Nationalism, and Inter-American Relations: Guatemala, Bolivia, and the United States, 1945–1961* (Lewiston, ME, 1999); Alan McPherson, *Yankee No! Anti-Americanism in U.S.-Latin American Relations* (Cambridge, MA, 2003). On U.S.-Latin American relations and U.S. hegemony, see Gilbert M. Joseph, Catherine C. LeGrand, and Ricardo D. Salvatore, eds., *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations* (Durham, 1998); Peter H. Smith, *Talons of the Eagle: Latin America, the United States, and the World* (New York, 2013).

9. On "intermestic," or international/domestic politics, see Fredrik Logevall, "Politics and Foreign Relations," *The Journal of American History* 95, no. 4 (2009): 1074–78.

10. On the interconnected domestic and international dynamics of the Cold War in Latin America, see Greg Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War* (Chicago, 2004); Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniela Spenser, eds., *In From the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War* (Durham, 2008).

Latin American reactions to the fear and panic that gripped the U.S. public vividly illustrates the fact that the Cold War was a very different experience with different stakes for the United States and Latin America.<sup>11</sup> Although Kennedy and other U.S. leaders tried to incorporate their neighbors into *their* Cold War—a confrontation with the Soviet Union—Latin American citizens were engaged in an entirely different battle, one that had more to do with internal divisions and U.S. hegemony.

For the United States, the Cuban Missile Crisis was an emergency; for Latin America, it was both a danger and an opportunity. This combustible combination of threat and possibility manifested in various ways and with a wide range of consequences throughout the hemisphere. Dean Rusk's message of multilateralism during the OAS meeting, while ambitious, still failed to capture the true scope of the event: domestic politics and dissatisfaction with U.S.–Latin American relations drove people across the region to claim numerous, conflicting roles in the Latin American Missile Crisis.

#### ON THE WARPATH

Many Latin American leaders enthusiastically supported the U.S. quarantine of Cuba, and some even tried to push Kennedy to take a more aggressive approach. By the time of the missile crisis, Castro had made numerous enemies through his efforts to “export revolution.”<sup>12</sup> Despite his lack of success in liberating other subjugated populations, Castro's efforts enraged his neighbors, and they hoped that the missile crisis would prompt the United States to finally unseat the Cuban firebrand. Other Latin American leaders joined the effort to remove the missile bases because they saw it as an opportunity to gain U.S. support to shift local balances of power.

National leaders in Central America, the Caribbean, and northern South America demonstrated their support for the U.S. position by pledging military and strategic assistance. The governments of the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Colombia, Venezuela, Panama, Honduras, Haiti, Costa Rica, and El Salvador all expressed their readiness to provide marine, naval, and air force units to maintain the quarantine. They also agreed to make their air fields, ports,

11. On reactions to the missile crisis among U.S. citizens, see Alice L. George, *Awaiting Armageddon: How Americans Faced the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2003). On distinguishing Latin America's Cold War from that of the United States, see Greg Grandin and Gilbert M. Joseph, eds., *A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence During Latin America's Long Cold War* (Durham, 2010); Tanya Harmer, *Allende's Chile and the Inter-American Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2011); Virginia Garrard-Burnett, Mark Lawrence, and Julio Moreno, eds., *Beyond the Eagle's Shadow: New Histories of Latin America's Cold War* (Albuquerque, 2013).

12. On Cuba's export of revolution to Latin America, see Olga Pellicer de Brody, “Cuba y América Latina: ¿Coexistencia Pacífica o Solidaridad Revolucionaria?,” *Foro Internacional* 12, no. 3 (47) (1972): 297–307; Maurice Halperin, *The Taming of Fidel Castro* (Berkeley 1981); Carla Anne Robbins, *The Cuban Threat* (New York, 1983); Jorge I. Domínguez, *To Make a World Safe for Revolution: Cuba's Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA, 1989); Antonio Montilla Saldivia, *Cuba: Cuarenta años de política exterior* (Caracas, 1999).

and other facilities available if war became necessary.<sup>13</sup> Their enthusiasm stemmed from animosity toward Castro, who had been supporting revolutionary efforts to overthrow many of these governments. In 1959, Castro had publicly claimed credit for a failed expedition against Dominican tyrant Rafael Trujillo; that same year, other small groups of revolutionaries had departed from Cuban shores to launch attacks against the Panamanian, Nicaraguan, and Haitian governments.<sup>14</sup> By the time of the missile crisis, all of these nations had already cut diplomatic relations with Cuba and had voted to exclude the island from the OAS.

Nicaraguan dictator Luis Somoza Debayle, who considered Castro a personal enemy, adopted an especially belligerent stance. A member of one of Latin America's longest-lasting familial dynasties, the Nicaraguan president had maneuvered himself into power after the assassination of his father, Anastasio Somoza García. The family's hold over Nicaraguan politics dated as far back as 1934, when the elder Somoza used his position as director of the National Guard to assassinate the guerrilla leader Augusto César Sandino; two years later, Somoza staged a coup and seized power. Somoza quickly consolidated his control, placing loyal *somocistas* in key positions in the government and National Guard, and acquiring immense wealth through investments, concessions to U.S. companies, theft, and graft. The Somozas were the largest landowners in Nicaragua, and were infamous for their corrupt rule and repression of dissent.<sup>15</sup> These qualities attracted the ire of Fidel Castro, who, soon after overthrowing Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista, turned his gaze upon Nicaragua. In the years leading up to the missile crisis, Castro's diplomatic officials in Mexico spent much of their time supporting revolutionary efforts by Nicaraguan political exiles.<sup>16</sup>

When Somoza learned of the missiles in Cuba, he saw the crisis as a chance to eliminate a dangerous enemy and called for an invasion of the island. He declared on October 26 that the blockade was "only a provisional measure that by itself is not sufficient to definitively solve the Cuban problem."<sup>17</sup> Multiple times during the crisis, Somoza criticized the United States for failing to act. On November 8,

13. Leticia Bobadilla González, *México y la OEA: Los debates diplomáticos, 1959-1964* (Mexico City, 2006), 155.

14. Robbins, *The Cuban Threat*, 9; Jonathan C. Brown, "The Caribbean War of 1959" (Conference Paper presented at the 54th International Conference of Americanists, Vienna, 2012).

15. On Nicaragua and the Somozas, see John A. Booth, *The End and the Beginning: The Nicaraguan Revolution* (Boulder, CO, 1985); Jeffrey L. Gould, *To Lead As Equals: Rural Protest and Political Consciousness in Chinandega, Nicaragua, 1912-1979* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1990); Stephen Kinzer, *Blood of Brothers: Life and War in Nicaragua* (Cambridge, MA, 1991); Knut Walter, *The Regime of Anastasio Somoza: 1936-1956* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1993).

16. Manuel Rangel Escamilla, "Actividades de asilados políticos nicaraguenses residentes en nuestro país que en forma constante tratan de efectuar una conjura en contra del gobierno actual de la República de Nicaragua que preside el Gral. Anastasio Somoza," July 11, 1960, Dirección Federal de Seguridad, expediente (exp.) 11-56-60, legajo (leg.) 1, hoja 123, Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City (hereafter AGN); Interview, September 22, 1960, Dirección Federal de Seguridad, exp. 76-3-60, leg. 1, exp. 229, AGN.

17. "Bloqueo, medida inicial para derrumbe de Castro!": Somoza," *Novedades*, October 27, 1962.

he offered Nicaraguan territory as a base of operations and aid for anti-Castro Cuban exiles and claimed that “thousands of Nicaraguans would battle for their ideals on Cuban shores.”<sup>18</sup> Somoza declared that Kennedy could limit his own country’s policy but not that of Nicaragua. “Latin America must decide its own position with respect to the Castro-Communist menace . . . the more we delay, the more danger it presents,” he warned. “If the United States does not accompany us in the liquidation of Castro, Latin America will see this business through to the end.”<sup>19</sup> Just as Kennedy used the OAS resolution to cloak his quarantine in the mantle of multilateralism, Somoza portrayed his own, more aggressive response as a shared, pan-Latin American necessity. He argued that Latin Americans should no longer allow the United States to determine their defense against the threats of Castro and communism.

Not all Nicaraguans supported Somoza’s belligerent response to the missile crisis, and many of those who opposed their country’s dictator also challenged his foreign policy. On October 25, more than four hundred students held a pro-Castro demonstration at the National Autonomous University of León.<sup>20</sup> The university was a long-standing center of political opposition; as early as 1939, students there had begun organizing protests and burning portraits of Somoza.<sup>21</sup> Tomás Borge Martínez, one of the founders of the Sandinista Front of National Liberation (*Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional*, or FSLN) in 1961, participated in an anti-Somocista student movement in León in the late forties.<sup>22</sup> The Sandinistas were still a small group at the time of the missile crisis, but they nonetheless issued a declaration of support for Castro, vowing “We Nicaraguans are resolved to give our lives if necessary in defense of the Cuban Revolution.”<sup>23</sup> It would seem, then, that on at least one point Luis Somoza and the Sandinistas were agreed: Nicaraguans were willing to fight and die over the question of Cuba.

Other Latin American leaders also tried to convince the United States to take a stronger stance against Castro. In Venezuela, the democratically elected president Rómulo Betancourt, a moderate reformer and personal friend of Kennedy, was struggling against military uprisings and combative leftist groups such as the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (*Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria*, or MIR) and the Moscow-line Communist Party of Venezuela (*Partido Comunista de Venezuela*, or PCV). Betancourt had also been a friend to Castro until 1959, when disagreement over the issues of communism and cooperation with the United

18. “Los liberales no toleramos a ningún dictador”: L. Somoza,” *Novedades*, November 8, 1962.

19. “Nicaraguan is for Invasion of Cuba Despite U.S. View,” *New York Times*, November 9, 1962.

20. “Mitin rojo en la Universidad de León, ayer,” *Novedades*, October 26, 1962.

21. Booth, *The End and the Beginning*, 70.

22. *Ibid.*, 108–9.

23. “Sandinistas con Cuba,” *Revolución*, October 30, 1962.

States drove a permanent wedge between them.<sup>24</sup> Betancourt became the poster child for Kennedy's most ambitious anti-communist initiative in the Americas, the Alliance for Progress, while Fidel began to support Betancourt's opponents, calling his former ally "the tyrant of Venezuela" and publicly encouraging "the heroic struggle waged by the people of Venezuela against the outrages committed by the present government."<sup>25</sup> At the time of the missile crisis, Cuban communists were helping the MIR and PCV form a new National Liberation Front with an armed wing that had joined numerous other guerrilla groups in staging attacks on rural and urban targets across the country.<sup>26</sup>

Betancourt seized upon the missile crisis as an opportunity to crack down on both Castro and the domestic Venezuelan opposition that was receiving Cuban support. Immediately upon learning of the missiles on October 22, Betancourt pledged his support to the quarantine and began taking security measures, ordering police in the oil-producing areas to "fill up the jails."<sup>27</sup> Five days later, Venezuela became the first Latin American country to order full-scale mobilization of its armed forces to both meet international obligations and to quell internal unrest prompted by the crisis.<sup>28</sup> In an address to the nation, Betancourt explained that he was calling up the armed forces for the first time since World War II because "the Government of Venezuela will comply with each and every one of its international compromises. Not just out of loyalty to the written words of the treaties, that oblige us in an inevitable form, but also out of an instinct of national survival."<sup>29</sup> The heightened security was not enough to prevent a half-dozen pipe bombings, including one in front of the First National City Bank of New York and another in an alley near the U.S. embassy's administrative offices in Caracas.<sup>30</sup> Small groups armed with machine guns also attacked a Goodyear Tires warehouse and burned stacks of tires.<sup>31</sup>

24. On Venezuela's domestic politics and international relations under Betancourt, see Stephen G. Rabe, "The Caribbean Triangle: Betancourt, Castro, and Trujillo and U.S. Foreign Policy, 1958-1963," *Diplomatic History* 20, no. 1 (1996): 55-78; Aragon Storm Miller, "Precarious Paths to Freedom: The United States, the Caribbean Basin, & the New Politics of the Latin American Cold War, 1958-1968" (PhD diss., University of Texas, 2012).

25. Stephen G. Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World: John F. Kennedy Confronts Communist Revolution in Latin America* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1999), 104. On the Alliance for Progress, see Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World*, and Jeffrey F. Taffet, *Foreign Aid as Foreign Policy: The Alliance for Progress in Latin America* (New York, 2007).

26. Miller, "Precarious Paths to Freedom," 191; Richard Gott, *Guerrilla Movements in Latin America* (Garden City, 1971), 112.

27. C. Allan Stewart, "Internal Situation," October 23, 1962, National Security Files, Countries, box 192, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, Boston, MA (hereafter JFKL).

28. CIA, "The Crisis USSR/Cuba: Information As of 0600, 28 October 1962," October 28, 1962, Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited, Digital National Security Archive (hereafter DNSA).

29. "El Presidente a la nación: No tengo por que negar que es difícil y riesgosa la situación de hoy," *El Nacional*, October 28, 1962.

30. "Violentas acciones populares en América Latina contra los agresores de la Revolución Cubana," *Revolución*, October 26, 1962.

31. Circular Telegram 828 from the Department of State, Summary of Actions by Castro/Communists in Latin America During the Missile Crisis, November 2, 1962, Cuban Missile Crisis, Item # CC01875, DNSA.

The explosion of a bomb in the offices of Pan American Airways reportedly drove hundreds of people into the streets of Caracas, terrified that World War III had broken out.<sup>32</sup>

Betancourt's government paid the price for its foreign policy in temporarily lost export revenues when saboteurs dynamited power stations and blew up oil pipelines owned by U.S. petroleum companies. During his address to the nation, Betancourt had spoken at length about the importance of petroleum and the threat that the missiles in Cuba posed to Venezuela's oil industry; mere hours later, "communist terrorists" set off explosives in four electric power stations around Lake Maracaibo, about three hundred miles west of Caracas.<sup>33</sup> According to CIA estimates, the explosions temporarily reduced the country's total oil output by one-sixth, a significant blow considering that those exports provided approximately ninety percent of Venezuela's foreign exchange earnings at the time.<sup>34</sup> A few days later, other saboteurs blew up oil and gas pipelines near Puerto La Cruz, 160 miles east of Caracas.<sup>35</sup> Venezuela's representative in the OAS blamed Cuba, claiming that during the missile crisis authorities had intercepted a cable from Havana urging Venezuelan communist groups to attack U.S. government and industrial installations.<sup>36</sup> The Cubans had indeed celebrated the acts of sabotage with front-page headlines, but they denied involvement, calling the accusations in the OAS "another farce by the Yankee lackeys."<sup>37</sup>

While some members of the Venezuelan population showed their opposition to Betancourt and his foreign policy with bombs and sabotage, others found more peaceful ways to voice their concerns. On October 26, members of the Congressional Committee on Foreign Policy cross-examined Foreign Minister Marcos Falcón Briceño about Venezuela's vote of support for the blockade in the OAS. Raúl Lugo Rojas, a representative of the MIR who had been arrested the previous June in connection with a failed military revolt against the Betancourt government, questioned the right of the United States to establish quarantines in

32. "Pánico en Caracas," *Revolución*, October 27, 1962.

33. "Más de un millón de dólares perdidos en sabotaje a la creole en Tía Juana" *El Nacional*, November 2, 1962.

34. Circular Telegram 828 from the Department of State, Item # CC01875, DNSA; "Amendment to the US Oil Import Program and Venezuelan Petroleum," CIA, December 13, 1962, National Security Files, Countries, box 192, JFKL.

35. "Venezuelan Raid Blasts Oil Lines: Renewed Sabotage Directed at U.S. Concerns—Regime Calls 5,000 Reservists 4 Pipelines Blasted in New Raid Laid to Saboteurs in Venezuela," *New York Times*, November 4, 1962; "Dos intentos de sabotaje para paralizar la producción petrolera," *El Nacional*, November 6, 1962.

36. Cabell Phillips, "Venezuelan Links Cuba to Sabotage: Offers O.A.S. Documentary Proof—Cites Interception of Order to Reds Oil Bombing Cited," *New York Times*, November 10, 1962.

37. "Dinamitan instalaciones petroleras en Venezuela: Más de 1 millón de dólares diarios en pérdidas," *Revolución*, October 29, 1962; "Otra farsa de los lacayos yanquis: Conjura de Venezuela y la OEA contra Cuba," *Revolución*, November 6, 1962.

international waters.<sup>38</sup> Servando García Ponce of the Communist Party asked whether supporting the U.S. position meant that the government of Venezuela “recognizes that only the great powers have the right to possess the most modern weapons and only those powers have the capacity to qualify weapons as offensive or defensive?” A third representative, José Herrera Oropeza from the center-left Democratic Republican Union party, argued that “the OAS has been converted into an instrument destined to wound Latin Americans themselves.”<sup>39</sup> The foreign minister listened patiently to these critiques and questions, then denied that Venezuela’s foreign policy was “at the service of the United States,” arguing that the missile crisis was a question of collective security.

The missile crisis thus contributed to domestic unrest within Venezuela and cost its government significant oil revenues, but it also gave Betancourt an excuse to strike a blow against the local opposition and their Cuban supporters. The attacks against the power stations and the oil and gas pipelines provided much-needed evidence for his efforts to convince domestic and international audiences that Venezuela was Castro’s “number one target” in the hemisphere. The United States continued pouring money and military equipment into Venezuela, and Betancourt managed to keep both the leftist opposition and the military in check long enough for the presidential elections of December 1963 to usher in Venezuela’s first peaceful transfer of power from one democratically elected leader to another.<sup>40</sup>

Argentina’s government and military forces were the earliest and most enthusiastic partners in U.S. efforts to remove the missiles. The country’s interim president, José María Guido, was the first Latin American leader to promise military support and followed through by deploying two destroyers, *Espora* and *Rosales*, to join the U.S. fleet in the Caribbean.<sup>41</sup> An editorial titled “Liberty Is Non-Negotiable” in the newspaper *La Prensa* summarily rejected the possibility of a negotiated removal of the missiles. “Reality no longer allows cleverness,

38. “Venezuela Says Revolt is Ended: Death Toll is Put at 150 in Puerto Cabello Fighting,” *New York Times*, June 5, 1962. Lugo was released after the revolt as he still retained his parliamentary immunity from prosecution.

39. “Venezuela está legalmente comprometida a una acción multilateral americana,” *El Nacional*, October 27, 1962.

40. Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World*, 104–9.

41. Cable from Ambassador Robert M. McClintock to Secretary of State Dean Rusk, October 22, 1969, DNSA. “Call on the President by General Pedro Aramburu, Former President of Argentina,” November 5, 1962, President’s Office Files, Countries Argentina, box 111, folder 15, JFKL; “Zarparán hoy para el caribe los destructores ‘Rosales’ y ‘Espora,’” *La Prensa*, October 28, 1962. According to Stephen Rabe, the government of Venezuela also deployed two destroyers to support the U.S. Navy’s blockade. Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World*, 104. The Dominican Council of State sent two frigates to join the quarantine as well, but they soon had to detour to Puerto Rico for costly repairs. Piero Gleijeses, *The Dominican Crisis: 1965 Constitutionalist Revolt and American Intervention* (Baltimore, 1978), 70; “U.S.-Latin Naval Force Set Up to Aid Blockade,” *New York Times*, November 10, 1962.

confusion, or intermediary formulas,” claimed the author.<sup>42</sup> Another editorial in *La Nación* declared: “If Communism realizes that the West can no longer be threatened without fear of retaliation, the cause of democracy will have won an important battle.”<sup>43</sup> Perhaps the author of the editorial did not appreciate the irony of making such a claim in a country where a military coup only months prior had unseated the democratically elected president, Arturo Frondizi. During his time in office, Frondizi had roused the ire of the armed forces by increasing trade with the Soviet Union, defending Castro and meeting with Che Guevara in the OAS, and, most importantly, allowing Peronist candidates to participate in gubernatorial and congressional elections in March 1962.<sup>44</sup> Mere days after the Peronists won a convincing victory at the polls, the military annulled the results and arrested Frondizi.<sup>45</sup>

The Argentine response to the missile crisis, unlike that of Nicaragua or Venezuela, had less to do with Castro’s revolutionary meddling and more to do with internecine power struggles. In 1962, Argentina’s armed forces were practically at war with each other over the role that the military should play in promoting modernization and democracy and fighting communism and Peronism.<sup>46</sup> The virulently anti-Peronist “*colorados*” (reds) were campaigning for military rule, while the legalist “*azules*” (blues) sought to preserve civilian rule under constitutional norms. On multiple occasions, the two groups demonstrated their willingness to come to blows, such as in April 1962 when an *azul*-led tank column descended upon *colorado* troops assembled in downtown Buenos Aires. Later that year, in September, a week-long armed confrontation broke out between the coalitions.<sup>47</sup> José María Guido, interim president at the time of the missile crisis, had been elevated from his post in the Senate by the *azules* following the March 1962 military coup against Frondizi. He was, as historian Marvin Goldwert put it, “really nothing more than the tool of the divided Argentine military.”<sup>48</sup>

The divisions within the Argentine armed forces determined their response to the missile crisis. After Guido deployed the navy destroyers, leaders of the other branches clamored to become involved as well. Without consulting his superiors in the Defense and Foreign Ministries, Brigadier General Cayo Alsina of the *colorados* offered Air Force support to his U.S. counterpart.<sup>49</sup> Brigadier General Juan Carlos

42. “La libertad no es negociable,” *La Prensa*, October 23, 1962.

43. “Opinion of the Week: On the Cuban Crisis: Viewed by Areas in the Nation and in Latin America in Western Europe in Asian-African Nations,” *New York Times*, October 28, 1962.

44. Cole Blasier, *The Giant’s Rival: The USSR and Latin America* (Pittsburgh, PA, 1983); David Sheinin, *Argentina And the United States: An Alliance Contained* (Athens, GA, 2006).

45. Antonius C. G. M. Robben, *Political Violence and Trauma in Argentina* (Philadelphia, PA, 2011), 34.

46. Sheinin, *Argentina and the United States*, 125.

47. Marvin Goldwert, *Democracy, Militarism, and Nationalism in Argentina, 1930–1966* (Austin, 1972), 189–91.

48. *Ibid.*, 190.

49. Robert A. Potash, *The Army & Politics in Argentina, 1962–1973: From Frondizi’s Fall to the Peronist Restoration* (Stanford, CA, 1969), 71.

Onganía, leader of the *azules* faction and commander in chief of the army, met with the chief of the U.S. mission in Argentina to offer army participation in case the quarantine developed into a land deployment. Onganía also issued a public statement. "Faced with the worldwide and continental strategic situation," Onganía declared, "the commander in chief of the armed forces has resolved to provide complete moral and material support to the cause of the free world."<sup>50</sup> The U.S. ambassador, Robert McClintock, remarked to his superiors in the State Department that the "Argentine Army, jealous of [its] two sister services, wishes to get into [the] act."<sup>51</sup> He recommended that the United States provide amphibious training for an Argentine army battalion for the sake of future U.S. relations with the Argentine armed forces. A few weeks later, the Argentine Secretary of War, General Benjamin Rattenbach, confirmed the ambassador's hopes for future cooperation when he requested further training for the battalion that had been formed during the crisis, arguing that this would "contribute much in overcoming, among graduates, old resistance to inter-American military cooperation."<sup>52</sup> Argentine military officials were clearly seeking to use the missile crisis to strengthen their individual and institutional ties to the United States.

Like the Venezuelans, the Argentines paid a price for their enthusiastic support of the U.S. quarantine. In mid-November, nine Argentine Air Force pilots died in Panama in a flight connected with the hemispheric operation to force the removal of the missiles. Dean Rusk instructed Ambassador McClintock to meet with the Argentine Foreign Minister to express his "deep regret for the most unfortunate accident."<sup>53</sup> President Kennedy followed up with a letter to President Guido, thanking him for the "prompt and resolute manner in which Argentina contributed to the carrying out of the decision of the Organization of American States" and expressing grief over the deaths of the nine air force pilots.<sup>54</sup>

While the Argentine government clearly supported the United States throughout the missile crisis and military officials tried to use it as a chance to strengthen the relationship between the two countries, some very vocal members of the nation's public sympathized with Castro. Saboteurs threw Molotov cocktails at a U.S.-sponsored "Allied for Progress" exhibit in Buenos Aires on October 24.<sup>55</sup> The violence escalated the next day into an attack on the home of the cultural attaché of the U.S. embassy. Demonstrators lobbed gasoline bombs at more than

50. "Tómanse nuevas medidas para apoyar la defensa continental," *La Prensa*, October 25, 1962.

51. Cable from Secretary of State Dean Rusk to Ambassador McClintock, November 5, 1962, box 7, JFKL.

52. Cable from Ambassador McClintock to the Department of State, November 20, 1962, box 7, JFKL.

53. Cable from Secretary of State Dean Rusk to Ambassador McClintock, November 17, 1962, box 7, JFKL.

54. John F. Kennedy, "Letter from Kennedy to Guido," December 26, 1962, President's Office Files, Argentina, box 111, folder 13, JFKL.

55. "Bombas contra la muestra 'aliados para el progreso,'" *La Prensa*, October 25, 1962.

ten businesses with connections to the United States, including Pepsi-Cola and Ford. On October 26, police had to resort to tear gas to disperse what the *New York Times* described as “a rock-throwing mob of about four hundred people.”<sup>56</sup> The CIA and national press reported that smaller, widely scattered incidents of sabotage and demonstrations occurred throughout the rest of the country.<sup>57</sup> The violence lasted for days, as three people were wounded on October 31 in a shootout between police and a group of protesters carrying Argentine and Cuban flags, and saboteurs launched tar bombs at a branch of a U.S. bank in Buenos Aires.<sup>58</sup>

Protestors used the international confrontation as an opportunity to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the Alliance for Progress and with U.S. economic penetration of their country. In 1962, Argentina’s economy was in a depression and its citizens were suffering from inflation, stagnation, and shortages. Controversial austerity measures imposed by the International Monetary Fund’s stabilization plan fueled anticorporate populism and nationalist sentiment. The destruction of U.S. property during the missile crisis starkly illustrated the rising tide of economic nationalism, forcing Argentina’s leaders to take note. Almost exactly a year after the missile crisis, newly elected president Arturo Illia caved to public pressures and delivered on his campaign promise to cancel private contracts held by transnational oil companies. Infuriated, McClintock and other U.S. officials responded to Illia’s economic nationalism by decreasing assistance and foreign aid to Argentina’s civilian government and increasing their support for military leaders.<sup>59</sup> Beginning in 1963, U.S. military aid and sales of material to Argentina rose dramatically.<sup>60</sup>

The United States had another reason for providing increased funding to Argentina’s military: gratitude. According to David Sheinin, “the U.S. government seemed to regard the [Military Assistance Program] in part as compensation for Argentina’s support for the American blockade of Cuba at the time of the missile crisis.”<sup>61</sup> General Onganía, who had participated so enthusiastically in the quarantine, further consolidated his control over the armed forces with the help of the U.S. military assistance program. In 1966, the armed forces ousted Illia in a coup and installed Onganía in his place, ushering in a four-year military dictatorship. The general’s support for the United States during the Cuban Missile Crisis had earned him the enduring gratitude of U.S. leaders, whose military assistance in turn helped him solidify his position at the center of Argentina’s national politics.

56. “Rioting in Buenos Aires,” *New York Times*, October 27, 1962.

57. Circular Telegram 828 from the Department of State, Item # CCo1875, DNSA; “Cometiéronse diversos atentados,” *La Prensa*, October 26, 1962.

58. “Apoyo a la firme política de Cuba: Violenta acción popular, tiroteos y manifestaciones en Argentina,” *Revolución*, November 1, 1962.

59. Dustin Walcher, “Petroleum Pitfalls: The United States, Argentine Nationalism, and the 1963 Oil Crisis,” *Diplomatic History* 37, no. 1 (2013): 24–57, 54.

60. Sheinin, *Argentina and the United States*, 126.

61. *Ibid.*

## AMBIVALENT ALLIES

Elsewhere in Latin America, official support for the U.S. position was more ambivalent. During the emergency OAS meeting on October 23, three countries made sure to clarify that they would not endorse an invasion to remove the missiles from Cuba. In the section-by-section vote on the final resolution, the representatives from Mexico, Bolivia, and Brazil abstained on the clause that authorized the use of armed force to prevent the missiles from threatening the peace of the hemisphere.<sup>62</sup> Motivated largely by domestic concerns, the leaders of these three countries sought to find a middle ground where they could support the United States without directly opposing the Soviets or Castro.

Prior to the missile crisis, Mexico's semi-authoritarian government had been one of Fidel Castro's greatest public advocates in the region. The hegemonic governing party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*, or PRI), dated its origins to the Mexican Revolution of 1910, and its increasingly conservative leaders sought to capitalize upon Castro's popularity to bolster their own faltering revolutionary credentials.<sup>63</sup> Mexico was the first country in the Americas to officially recognize Castro's new regime in January 1959, and President Adolfo López Mateos repeatedly defended the Cuban government during a tour of South America the following year.<sup>64</sup> In June 1960, López Mateos welcomed his Cuban counterpart, President Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado, in an official state visit, declaring, "We, who have travelled similar paths, understand and value the transformative effort that Cuba is undertaking."<sup>65</sup> Castro's champion in the hemisphere, Mexico was the only country in Latin America that never cut diplomatic relations with Cuba.

When Kennedy revealed the presence of Soviet missiles in the Caribbean, Mexico's president tried to use his country's special relationship with Cuba to find a peaceful resolution. López Mateos was out of the country at the time of Kennedy's announcement, finishing a tour of Asia. He cut his trip short, and on board his trans-Pacific flight home sent urgent messages to Kennedy and Dorticós. In both, he made a plea in favor of peace, and in the note to the latter he "expressed his fervent desire that the missiles not be used in any form and that they be removed

62. Tad Szulc, "Council Vote 19-0: Latins Act Quickly on Plea by Rusk—Use of Force Endorsed," *New York Times*, October 24, 1962.

63. On Mexico's relations with Cuba, see Christopher M. White, *Creating a Third World: Mexico, Cuba, and the United States During the Castro Era* (Albuquerque, 2007); Renata Keller, "A Foreign Policy for Domestic Consumption: Mexico's Lukewarm Defense of Castro, 1959–1969," *Latin American Research Review* 47, no. 2 (2012): 100–19. On Mexico's transition from revolution to authoritarian rule, see Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent, eds., *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico* (Durham, 1994); Roderic Ai Camp, *Politics in Mexico: The Decline of Authoritarianism*, 3rd ed. (New York and Oxford, 1999).

64. Telegram from Teresa Casuso Morín at the Cuban Embassy in Mexico to President Adolfo López Mateos, January 2, 1959, Adolfo López Mateos Presidential Collection 559.1/2, leg. 21, AGN; *Presencia Internacional de Adolfo López Mateos*, vol. I (Mexico City, 1963).

65. *Los presidentes de México: Discursos políticos 1910–1988*, vol. IV (Mexico City: 1988), 82.

from Cuba.”<sup>66</sup> Upon his return to Mexico, the president went straight to the national palace and delivered an improvised speech from the balcony to the waiting crowds below, declaring: “We are in the ranks of democracy. We will fight for peace and for liberty.”<sup>67</sup>

In practice, “fighting for peace” meant clamping down on public protests regarding the missile crisis. Intelligence agents and army officials closely monitored the actions of any group suspected of harboring sympathies for Cuba. Unlike in Argentina, different branches of the security forces cooperated and shared information; for example, on October 25, the ministry of national defense sent a report to the minister of the interior warning of leftist plans for informal, “lightning,” protest meetings.<sup>68</sup> On November 4, riot police arrived two hours before a coalition of leftist groups planned to hold a meeting criticizing the U.S. quarantine of Cuba. The police tore down signs and banners and ordered the organizers to vacate the premises.<sup>69</sup> The Mexican government also adopted military measures to minimize repercussions within and surrounding the country. The Argentine newspaper *La Prensa* quoted unofficial sources in the state of Veracruz that claimed that the Mexican navy had deployed at least ten ships to patrol the channel between the Yucatán peninsula and Cuba. Additionally, the government sent army troops to guard petroleum installations from sabotage, effectively preventing the sort of damages that the Venezuelans suffered.<sup>70</sup>

This firm governmental response combined with a relative lack of popular activism to keep violence from breaking out within Mexico. No problems were reported when on the night of October 25, one thousand students at the National Autonomous University in Mexico City held a protest denouncing the blockade.<sup>71</sup> Ex-president Lázaro Cárdenas, the Mexican Communist Party, the Popular Socialist Party, and the leftist National Liberation Movement all limited their actions to nonviolent forms of protest: organizing meetings, sending telegrams, and issuing declarations.<sup>72</sup> Once the crisis had passed, one of Mexico’s leading leftist journalists, Manuel Marcué Pardiñas, bemoaned the lack of activism in his country. “In all the countries of Latin America,” Pardiñas wrote, “there occurred popular manifestations of support for Cuba and rejection of the aggressive plans of

66. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, “Declaración mexicana sobre Cuba y las armas atómicas,” *Política*, November 1, 1962.

67. *Presencia Internacional de Adolfo López Mateos*, 399.

68. General de División Agustín Olachea Aviles, October 25, 1962, Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales, caja 1475-A, exp. 27, AGN.

69. Manuel Rangel Escamilla, November 4, 1962, Dirección Federal de Seguridad, exp. 11-6-62, leg. 9, hoja 47, AGN.

70. “El respaldo de México a la actitud de E. Unidos,” *La Prensa*, October 28, 1962.

71. “Clamor mundial conduz á trégua,” *Última Hora*, October 26, 1962; “Apoyo de la juventud mexicana,” *Revolución*, October 27, 1962.

72. Movimiento de Liberación Nacional, “MLN Poster About Cuban Missile Crisis,” October 23, 1962, DFS, exp. 11-6-62, leg. 9, hoja 18, AGN; “Lázaro Cárdenas escribe a ‘N.Y. Times’ sobre la situación,” *El Nacional*, November 2, 1962.

the United States; in all, except Mexico.”<sup>73</sup> Marcué Pardiñas accused leftist groups of negligence and irresponsibility, claiming that their silence afforded the president with no option but to support the United States. He argued that “even if President López Mateos had wanted to resist U.S. pressure, on the basis of a united and powerful leftist opposition, he would not have been able because the left was neither united nor mobilized.” The government’s ambiguous policy toward Cuba had successfully co-opted a cause—defense of the Cuban Revolution—around which various leftist groups could otherwise have united and mobilized. At the same time, the swift and coordinated response on the part of the intelligence services and the armed forces further discouraged pro-Castro activism. López Mateos’s “carrot and stick” approach to governing served him well during the missile crisis.

Furthermore, there was at least as much popular approval of the blockade among the Mexican public as there was opposition. The U.S. consulates in Mérida, Tampico, Tijuana, Matamoros, and Monterrey reported widespread support for the United States during the missile crisis. As the consul in Mérida put it, “All in all, the U.S. had overwhelming support from this area and the only dissenting voice came from the local Cuban consul himself.”<sup>74</sup> The Nicaraguan news claimed that a group calling itself the Mexican Federation of Agricultural Organizations petitioned President López Mateos on behalf of 500,000 campesino families to break relations with “a government that has subdued and enslaved the Cuban people and out of vanity and narcissism has delivered its democratic and autonomous homeland to Soviet imperialism.”<sup>75</sup> Brazilian newspaper *Última Hora* reported that students at the University of Morelos in Cuernavaca burnt an effigy of Fidel Castro.<sup>76</sup>

Mexican support for the United States during the missile crisis led to a subtle but important shift in the relationship between the two countries. Before October 1962, U.S. officials worried that their southern neighbors were not taking the communist threat seriously and tried to use diplomatic and economic pressure to compel Mexican leaders to break relations with Castro’s government.<sup>77</sup> When Kennedy presented the world with indisputable proof of nuclear warheads in the Caribbean, the Mexican government had to choose a side. By supporting the United States in that crucial moment, López Mateos demonstrated where his true loyalties lay and gained U.S. acceptance of his foreign policy toward

73. Manuel Marcué Pardiñas, “La política internacional del gobierno del presidente Adolfo López Mateos,” *Política*, December 1, 1962.

74. “Reactions to Missile Crisis,” November 1962, US State Department Files Microfilm (24,461), 712.00/10-3162, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, Austin, TX.

75. “Medio millón de campesinos mexicanos piden se rompan relaciones con Fidel Castro,” *Novedades*, November 8, 1962.

76. “Clamor mundial conduz á trégua,” *Última Hora*, October 26, 1962.

77. Telegram 1634 from Thomas Mann to Secretary of State, December 6, 1961, Papers of Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., White House Files, Classified Subject File, WH-41, JFKL; Memorandum, John F. Kennedy and Adolfo López Mateos, “Communism in Latin America,” June 29, 1962, National Security Files, Trips and Conferences, box 236, JFKL.

Cuba. A year and a half after the crisis, Rusk wrote a memorandum to Lyndon Johnson about the president of Mexico, explaining that “at times his foreign policy has been too independent—for example on Cuba—but when fundamental issues are at stake we have usually found him understanding and willing to be helpful.”<sup>78</sup> In a subsequent meeting with López Mateos, Johnson said that he was sure that “when the chips were down, Mexico would be on the side of the United States.”<sup>79</sup> The Mexican government was thus able to continue defending Cuba publicly in times of peace to satisfy domestic groups, while at the same time it solidified its relations with the United States.

The missile crisis caused significantly greater problems in Bolivia, where another increasingly conservative, semi-authoritarian government with revolutionary roots was trying to hold on to power. President Víctor Paz Estenssoro, whose Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (*Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario*, or MNR) had seized control of the country in 1952, was overseeing what historian Herbert S. Klein describes as “Latin America’s most dynamic social and economic revolution since the Mexican Revolution of 1910.”<sup>80</sup> Under Paz’s leadership, the MNR had co-opted urban and rural militias, established universal suffrage, nationalized two-thirds of the tin-mining industry, and undertaken radical agrarian reforms.<sup>81</sup> At the same time, the Bolivian government took great care to avoid provoking an antirevolutionary backlash from the United States by compensating the owners of the tin mines, leaving other mines owned by U.S. companies intact, and maintaining legal protections for foreign investment. Instead of engendering U.S. opposition, Paz sought and gained financial assistance from the United States; by 1958, U.S. funds provided one-third of Bolivia’s national budget and the country had become the largest recipient of foreign aid in the Americas.<sup>82</sup> In the year leading up to the missile crisis, the Alliance for Progress had continued these trends, as Kennedy tried to use economic assistance to temper revolutionary tendencies and encourage political stability. Paz had been able to secure such largesse by arguing that his regime needed the support to keep its moderate revolution from falling into radical communist hands. Additionally, he upped the ante by “playing the Soviet card,” entertaining offers of aid from the Soviet Union to gain greater attention—and aid—from the United States.<sup>83</sup> An MNR journalist

78. Dean Rusk, “Memorandum for the President,” February 18, 1964, National Security Files, Mexico, box 61, folder 2, document 9, Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library, Austin, TX (hereafter LBJ Library).

79. “Meeting Between President Johnson and President López Mateos,” February 21, 1964, document 34b, *ibid.*

80. Herbert S. Klein, *A Concise History of Bolivia* (Cambridge, 2011), 208.

81. Thomas C. Field Jr., “Ideology as Strategy: Military-Led Modernization and the Origins of the Alliance for Progress in Bolivia,” *Diplomatic History* 36, no. 1 (2012): 147–83.

82. Klein, *A Concise History of Bolivia*, 218.

83. James F. Siekmeier, *The Bolivian Revolution and the United States, 1952 to Present* (University Park, PA, 2011), 80. See also Kevin Young, “Purging the Forces of Darkness: The United States, Monetary Stabilization, and the Containment of the Bolivian Revolution” *Diplomatic History* 37, no. 3 (June 2013), 509–37.

who worked with Paz recalled that the Bolivian president “wanted to be a Latin American Tito, to play both sides of the Cold War.”<sup>84</sup>

All of this political plotting combined with economic turmoil to leave the Bolivian government in a precarious position by the time of the missile crisis. Disagreements over international aid and stabilization programs had led to divisions among the leaders of the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement, fragmenting Paz Estenssoro’s base of support.<sup>85</sup> In June 1961, a series of strikes and demonstrations in mines, factories, and universities over a controversial plan of foreign aid convulsed the country and resulted in the deaths of five protestors; four months later, as many as twenty students were killed when security forces repressed riots sparked by an increase in fuel prices.<sup>86</sup> The U.S. Treasury Department’s decision to sell off thousands of tons of tin from the strategic stockpile in mid-1962 had also sent Bolivia’s domestic and international politics into a tailspin, prompting Bolivian legislators to demand renewed negotiations with the Soviets. Paz Estenssoro responded in September 1962 by postponing a visit to Washington and pulling Bolivia out of the OAS.<sup>87</sup> On numerous occasions, Paz declared the country in a state of siege, and he increasingly came to rely on the armed forces to quell internal unrest.<sup>88</sup> In September 1962, the government arrested one hundred army officers and federal policemen for participating in a “subversive plot.”<sup>89</sup> At the beginning of October, the government sent sixty political opponents into exile, accusing them of conspiring to overthrow Paz.<sup>90</sup> Bolivia’s leader was desperately trying to tame the revolution that he had unleashed to avoid the dual threats of civil war and U.S. intervention.

As soon as Kennedy announced the presence of missiles in Cuba, U.S. and Bolivian officials jumped into action in an effort to minimize the local effects of the crisis. The U.S. ambassador, Ben S. Stephansky, cabled Washington on October 23 to report that the Bolivian minister of government had warned him that leftists in the national congress were planning to make pro-Cuban speeches calling for demonstrations. Sounding like a meteorologist, he predicted “small, scattered disturbances likely this afternoon and evening with larger, violent and widespread ones expected tomorrow.” The Bolivian government minister had asked for the names and addresses of U.S. citizens in La Paz to provide adequate

84. Field, “Ideology as Strategy,” 153.

85. James W. Wilkie, *The Bolivian Revolution and U.S. Aid Since 1952: Financial Background and Context of Political Decisions* (Los Angeles, 1969), 43.

86. Edward C. Burke, “Bolivians Dispute Roles in Violence: Regime and Students Deny Firing During Protest,” *New York Times*, June 18, 1961; “7 Bolivians Killed as Police Halt Riot,” *New York Times*, October 25, 1961.

87. Thomas C. Field Jr., “Conflict on High: The Bolivian Revolution and the United States, 1961–1964” (PhD diss., London School of Economics, 2011), 78, 115–16.

88. Melville E. Osborne, “State of Siege,” October 6, 1962, President’s Office Files Countries Bolivia, box 112, folder, JFKL.

89. “Bolivia Jails 100 as Plotters,” *New York Times*, September 8, 1962.

90. “Bolivia Exiles 60 Opponents of Regime Seized in ‘Plot,’” *New York Times*, October 4, 1962.

police protection and requested arms, tear gas, and communications equipment. That same day, Stephansky spoke to the Bolivian foreign minister, who told him that Paz Estenssoro planned to circumvent the leftists in Congress by introducing a resolution favorable to the United States before they could take the floor. The undersecretary of the foreign minister had already called the Cuban chargé d'affaires and asked him to publicly express his opposition to any possible demonstrations, threatening that the Bolivian government would perceive even tacit Cuban support for demonstrations as an unfriendly act.<sup>91</sup>

Bolivian leaders' efforts to contain the damage from the missile crisis proved insufficient. A storm of protests broke out on October 26, a few days later than Stephansky had predicted. The disorder reportedly began when police used tear gas to disperse anti-Castro students who were stoning a pro-Cuban radio station. The students regrouped and began attacking a communist-friendly bookstore, shattering its windows and burning its wares. Three thousand labor union members responded with a pro-Castro demonstration near the U.S. embassy, where opposing demonstrators intercepted them. The crowd erupted into street fighting and rioting, mobs burned both Soviet and U.S. flags, and by the time army troops and police had restored order five people lay dead and dozens more were injured.<sup>92</sup>

U.S. officials, eager to turn the tragedy to their advantage, blamed the deaths on communist and communist-front organizations. The embassy in La Paz sent the State Department a list of names of twenty-eight people believed to be responsible for the violence, explaining that they had been seen distributing weapons to students and union members. Two of the people on the list had traveled to Moscow, and eight others had traveled to Cuba. Some of the suspected instigators were members of the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement, others were union leaders, and another was a former non-commissioned officer in the Bolivian army. The last person on the list had been recently employed as assistant to the minister of education, and led a group of armed men from that ministry on October 26.<sup>93</sup>

After the conclusion of the missile crisis, Paz Estenssoro tried to turn the tense situation into an opportunity to repair his partnership with the United States. On October 31, he sent a letter to Kennedy in which he explained: "My country, in line with its traditions, has wanted to demonstrate its hemispheric solidarity by acting jointly with all the nations of the Hemisphere . . . and it has so acted, despite the limitations caused by its internal order." The Bolivian president closed the letter expressing "sincere happiness" that his country's stance had been appreciated by the

91. Cable from Ambassador Ben S. Stephansky to the Department of State, October 23, 1962, DNSA.

92. Circular Telegram 828 from the Department of State, Item # CC01875, DNSA; "Bolivian Rioting Flares Over Cuba: 5 Die as Supporters of U.S Fight Castro Backers," *New York Times*, October 27, 1962.

93. Melville E. Osborne, "Castro-Cuban Influence in Violent Demonstration of October 26, 1962," November 16, 1962, Cuban Missile Crisis, NSA.

government of the United States, "to which we are bound by so many close ties."<sup>94</sup> Ambassador Stephansky celebrated the fact that the missile crisis had prompted Paz to reaffirm his connections with the United States at a time when U.S. tin dumping had endangered the relationship and provoked a leftward turn in Bolivian policy.<sup>95</sup> Paz and Stephansky's attempts to use the crisis to gain further U.S. backing for the Bolivian regime worked in the short run but were not enough to save Paz in the long term; in 1964 the Bolivian army ousted him in a largely bloodless coup.

The missile crisis thrust Brazil's leaders into a similarly difficult position. There, leftist president João Goulart had been in power for little over a year and was struggling to establish legitimacy in the position that his predecessor, Jânio Quadros, had suddenly and unexpectedly abandoned in August 1961. To gain the military's acceptance of his elevation from the vice presidency in the wake of Quadros's resignation, Goulart had been forced to agree to rule under a parliamentary system with reduced presidential powers.<sup>96</sup> Dissatisfied with this arrangement, Goulart immediately began maneuvering to abandon the parliamentary system, at the same time that he was trying to strengthen Brazil's shaky economy and keep the restive military in check. Adding to the challenge of the situation was the fact that the president did not have a unified popular base upon which to rely; as in many Latin American countries, Brazil's left wing was deeply divided, to such an extent that, as historian Thomas Skidmore observes, "Brazilians often referred to 'the lefts' (*as esquerdas*)."<sup>97</sup> The so-called "moderate" or "positive" left competed with the "radical" or "negative" left, and observers, especially those in the Brazilian military and the United States, often wondered which group carried greater weight with President Goulart. The fact that Goulart had established relations with the Soviet Union and refused to cut diplomatic ties with Castro added further tension to his relationship with the military and the United States.<sup>98</sup>

Goulart's initial reaction to news of the missiles was bellicose. In a meeting on October 22, he appeared "visibly shocked" when U.S. ambassador Lincoln Gordon summarized the evidence of the nuclear buildup in Cuba.<sup>99</sup> The Brazilian president reportedly seemed surprised by the "mildness" of the quarantine and argued that "even stronger language should be used with the Soviets, who are always harshly threatening others." Goulart expressed particular interest in seeing evidence of the missiles, which he claimed would be critical to publicly justify strong support for the United States. The Brazilian president described the Soviet action as a "grave diplomatic error," arguing that the United States

94. Letter from Victor Paz Estenssoro to Kennedy, October 31, 1962, President's Office Files, Bolivia, box 112, folder 2, JFKL.

95. Field, "Conflict on High," 132–33.

96. E. Bradford Burns, *A History of Brazil* (New York, NY, 1993).

97. Thomas E. Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil, 1930–1964: An Experiment in Democracy* (New York, 1967), 218.

98. Blasier, *The Giant's Rival*, 19.

99. Lincoln Gordon, Briefing of Brazilian President Goulart on Soviet Missiles in Cuba, October 22, 1962, DNSA.

was stronger than the Soviet Union and “could obliterate Cuba in an instant.” When Ambassador Gordon explained that Kennedy had designed the quarantine to avoid obliterating innocent Cuban civilians, Goulart retorted, “What, and let Americans get killed instead?”

After he had time to reflect and consult his advisors, President Goulart’s disagreement with the U.S. response to the missile crisis continued, but his arguments and goals changed. Three days after his discussion with Ambassador Gordon and two days after the OAS decision, Goulart wrote a letter to Kennedy, stating:

I will not conceal from your Excellency my apprehension and the dissatisfaction of the Brazilian people at the manner in which there was sought and obtained a decision of the Council of the OAS without there being carried out, or even discussed, an on-the-spot investigation and without any attempt by means of negotiation, such as we proposed last February, to obtain disarmament of Cuba with mutual guarantee of non-invasion.<sup>100</sup>

Changing his tune, Goulart now expressed opposition to military measures, arguing that Kennedy’s conduct had brought the world to the brink of nuclear war without first exhausting all possible means to avoid it. He also voiced fears about the future of the OAS and contended that the organization had been losing authority as a result of hasty decision-making that departed from the proper application of its own statutory norms. The Brazilian president used the missile crisis as an opportunity to decry what he saw as the transformation of the OAS into an “uncompromising ideological bloc.” His indignant letter circulated throughout the U.S. State Department, the White House, and the CIA. Intelligence analysts remarked: “Goulart showed very little concern over the threat to the hemisphere of the missiles in Cuba.”<sup>101</sup>

Goulart was telling the truth about widespread Brazilian dissatisfaction with the quarantine. The U.S. Foreign Broadcast Information Service reported “serious doubt among the Brazilian people that Kennedy’s accusation against Cuba is valid, and a practically universal determination to insist on exclusively peaceful methods of attacking the problem.”<sup>102</sup> Francisco Julião, a leader of northeastern Brazil’s peasant leagues (*ligas camponesas*) who had befriended Castro during a visit to Cuba in 1961, issued a declaration stating that “to guarantee the integrity of Cuba is to protect that of Brazil and the future of its people.”<sup>103</sup> Poet Álvaro Moreyra made a

100. Letter from João Goulart to Kennedy, October 25, 1962, President’s Office Files, Brazil, box 112, folder 16, JFKL.

101. CIA, “The Crisis USSR/Cuba: Information As of 0600, 28 October 1962.”

102. Foreign Broadcast Information Services, “Foreign Radio and Press Reaction to President Kennedy’s 22 October Speech on Cuba,” October 24, 1962, National Security Files, box 49, JFKL.

103. “Aumenta en el mundo la repulsa a la provocación de los Yanquis,” *Revolución*, October 25, 1962. On Julião, see Cliff Welch, “Keeping Communism Down on the Farm: The Brazilian Rural Labor Movement During the Cold War,” *Latin American Perspectives* 33, no. 3 (2006), 28–50.

rather radical proposal when he told reporters: "I think that President Kennedy should find a legal way to pass the government to Jacqueline, because the women are the ones who suffer the most in war and, especially, because these days they think better than men."<sup>104</sup> The night of the OAS vote, a crowd of three hundred union and student leaders gathered in front of the Foreign Ministry in Rio de Janeiro to express support for Castro. From the steps of the building, Brazilian Premier and Foreign Minister Hermes Lima declared that, as a pacifist nation, his country opposed intervention and defended Cuba's right to self-determination. The crowd cheered and applauded his argument that "the fact that a Socialist regime exists in Cuba does not mean that it is not an American regime."<sup>105</sup> Earlier the same day, Leonel Brizola, governor of the state of Rio Grande do Sul and leader of Brazil's radical left wing, had issued a statement accusing the United States of intending to invade Cuba. The head of the National Students' Union made a similar allegation during the demonstration, declaring that the U.S. air and sea inspection constituted "armed intervention in Cuba and preparation for invasion of the island."<sup>106</sup> A crowd of three thousand demonstrators applauded loudly when a nationalist congressional representative from Goulart's own Brazilian Workers Party (*Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro*, PTB), Sérgio Magalhães, demanded that Brazil break relations with the United States. "The Brazilian people will go to war in defense of the Cuban people," he declared, "because we too will be attacked."<sup>107</sup> Though the content of some of these statements was rather far-fetched, critics of the blockade made a valid point: any action taken against Cuba could set a dangerous precedent for the rest of Latin America.

As in Bolivia, tensions escalated during the course of the missile crisis. On October 25, some seven thousand pro-Castro demonstrators, the majority students, marched on the U.S. Embassy in Rio. They came within blocks before truckloads of riot police in steel helmets intercepted them with tear gas, clubs, and jets of water. The demonstrators responded by throwing rocks, prompting several police officers to fire submachine guns over the heads of the marchers, who fled.<sup>108</sup> In Recife, military police used batons and tear gas to disperse a pro-Cuba demonstration, beating protestors who had sought sanctuary in a nearby church.<sup>109</sup> Meanwhile, the stevedores' union threatened to stage a boycott of U.S. ships in Brazilian ports if the quarantine continued. The CIA reported that

104. "Bloqueio contra Cuba: Reação no Rio e Brasília," *Última Hora*, October 24, 1962.

105. "Hermes Lima: O indispensável é manter a paz," *Última Hora*, October 24, 1962.

106. Juan de Onis, "Brazil's Premier Supports Cubans: Asserts Country Has Right to Adopt Socialism," *New York Times*, October 24, 1962.

107. "Formidable solidaridad mundial a favor de la revolución cubana," *Revolución*, October 27, 1962.

108. Juan de Onis, "Protest in Brazil Ended by Gunfire: Anti-U.S. Marchers in Rio Dispersed by Police," *New York Times*, October 26, 1962; "Povo nas ruas da Guanabara enfrenta a polícia e protesta contra bloqueio," *Última Hora*, October 26, 1962.

109. "Recife: Violências da polícia contra manifestantes pró-Cuba," *Última Hora*, October 25, 1962.

the dock workers only backed down under pressure from Goulart, who told U.S. Ambassador Lincoln Gordon that he had “ordered [the] leaders of the stevedores’ union not to strike against handling American ships because Brazil supports the quarantine.”<sup>110</sup>

President Goulart took a number of other private and public steps to assist the U.S. quarantine while containing domestic unrest. He summoned communist leaders to his office, where he “told them to be wary of organizing massive demonstrations against U.S. or Brazilian policy, which could only be harmful to them.”<sup>111</sup> The Brazilian president also told Ambassador Gordon that he had informed the Soviets that his country’s air force would inspect and remove any cargo from Soviet aircraft landing in Brazil en route to Havana. In a quieter manner, the Brazilians thus helped maintain the air quarantine, just as the Argentines were publicly helping to maintain the naval quarantine.

Some Brazilians on the conservative side of the national political divide wanted their government to cooperate even more enthusiastically with the United States. On October 25, a group of two hundred women bearing signs that read “Cuba yes, Russia no” held a demonstration at the Foreign Ministry, where they accused Hermes Lima of cowering in fear of the Soviet Union.<sup>112</sup> An editorial in the newspaper *O Jornal* appealed to the nation’s armed forces to pressure Goulart to change his “pacifist line.” Other conservative newspapers accused the president of succumbing to radical leftist advisers.<sup>113</sup> The Board of Directors of the National Confederation of Industries called on Goulart to “give greater support to the decision of the Organization of American States on the blockade that punishes the nation that has violated the accords that defend our collective interests in this hemisphere.”<sup>114</sup> Fifteen organizations representing workers sent a telegram to Congress calling the blockade the “defense of our ideals of liberty against the insidious attacks of a totalitarian nation.”<sup>115</sup>

President Goulart tried to play the role of mediator on both domestic and international fronts. On October 24, he told legislators from forty-seven countries gathered for an interparliamentary meeting in Brasília that coexistence was the key. He urged them to “concentrate your efforts to avoid the catastrophe of a war in which there would be no winners.”<sup>116</sup> Two days later, the Inter-Parliamentary Council unanimously passed a resolution on the matter, and in a letter to Kennedy,

110. CIA, “The Crisis USSR/Cuba: Information As of 0600, 28 October 1962.”

111. Cable from Ambassador Lincoln A. Gordon to Secretary of State Dean Rusk, October 27, 1962, DNSA.

112. “Manifestaciones Mundiales,” *El Nacional*, October 26, 1962.

113. Juan de Onis, “Brazil Uneasy Over Cuba,” *New York Times*, October 27, 1962.

114. Juan de Onis, “Cuba Compromise Urged in Brazil: Ban on Atom Weapons and Aggression Proposed,” *New York Times*, October 28, 1962.

115. “Pedida definição do Brasil em face do conflito EUA-Cuba,” *Folha de São Paulo*, October 28, 1962.

116. Juan de Onis, “Goulart Says Coexistence is Vital in Divided World,” *New York Times*, October 25, 1962.

appealed “urgently to the governments of [the] United States and the Soviet Union . . . to avoid henceforth taking any action which might lead to [the] catastrophe of general conflict for [the] peoples of the world.”<sup>117</sup> The group of ministers further proposed that the United Nations take measures to resolve the missile crisis in a peaceful manner.

One of President Goulart’s closest political advisors, former foreign minister Francisco San Tiago Dantas, leader of Brazil’s moderate left wing, presciently proposed one way in which the crisis could be resolved in a peaceful manner. In an interview with reporters, Dantas argued that Cuba should yield its nuclear weapons in exchange for a pledge from the United States not to invade. “In the world in which we live,” he explained, “coexistence between democratic and communist regimes has become the only way of avoiding the irreparable consequences for both sides of a military clash.”<sup>118</sup> Dantas had made a similar argument in favor of coexistence and negotiation with Cuba earlier that year at a January meeting of the OAS.<sup>119</sup>

Another Brazilian proposal that offered a potential resolution to the missile crisis generated heated debate among U.S. officials. In September 1962, Brazil’s representative in the United Nations had submitted a draft resolution calling for the creation of a denuclearized zone throughout Latin America. Once the crisis developed in October, the Brazilians began pushing again for the proposal that they had tabled the month before. State Department analysts working for Assistant Secretary of State Harlan Cleveland advocated using the denuclearization proposal to give the Cubans a “face-saver to free themselves of the missiles.”<sup>120</sup> By agreeing to a “bona fide Latin American initiative,” the Cubans could theoretically extract themselves from the situation without appearing to bend under U.S. pressure.<sup>121</sup> The State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence was less enthusiastic and predicted that the Soviets would use the denuclearization proposal as a stalling tactic.<sup>122</sup> The Joint Chiefs of Staff emphatically opposed the idea of using the Brazilian initiative to resolve the crisis, arguing that it would not guarantee the prompt removal of the missiles and would degrade the United States’ military flexibility in its own

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117. Codacci-Pisanilli, “Text of Letter and Resolution Addressed to the President by Mr. Codacci-Pisanilli, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Council,” October 26, 1962, National Security Files, Countries, box 13, JFKL.

118. “Cuba Compromise Urged in Brazil.”

119. Tad Szulc, “Latins Still Divided on Castro: Punta Del Este Meeting Points Up Differences in the Hemisphere,” *New York Times*, February 4, 1962; Juan de Onís, “Dantas Defends Policies on Cuba: Brazil’s Deputies Hear Plea Opposing Ostracism,” *New York Times*, February 8, 1962.

120. Harlan Cleveland, “Operation Raincoat,” October 26, 1962, Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited, NSA.

121. Untitled Telegram from the Department of State to the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, October 26, 1962, DNSA.

122. Roger Hilsman, “Probable Soviet Attitude Toward Regional Denuclearization Proposals,” October 26, 1962, DNSA.



**Figure 2:** A poster in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, praises Kennedy as the “Defender of the Americas.” Source: UPI Photo, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, New York World Telegram and Sun Newspaper Photograph Collection. Printed with permission from Corbis Images.

backyard.<sup>123</sup> U.S. officials eventually reached a compromise and instructed UN representative Adlai Stevenson to give a cautiously positive response to the denuclearization proposal.<sup>124</sup>

Evidence has recently come to light that Kennedy and other U.S. leaders initiated yet another Brazilian effort to find a negotiated solution to the crisis. As historian James Hershberg has discovered, Brazil played a key role in a covert U.S. effort to convince Castro, not Khrushchev, to relinquish the missiles. On October 25, Kennedy’s Executive Committee discussed a proposal to make an approach to Castro “through a Latin American representative in Cuba, probably the Brazilian Ambassador, pointing out that Cuba was merely being exploited in the interests of the Soviet Union and that any of the possible paths by which the Cuban crisis can be expected to develop will result in the overthrow of his regime,

<sup>123</sup>. U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, “Nuclear-Free or Missile-Free Zones,” October 26, 1962, Cuban Missile Crisis, NSA.

<sup>124</sup>. U.S. Department of State, Evaluation of Brazilian Denuclearization Proposal; Memorandum to the President by Dean Rusk, “Brazilian Proposal for Latin American Denuclearized Zone,” November 10, 1962, President’s Office Files, Brazil, box 112, folder 16, JFKL.

if not its physical destruction.”<sup>125</sup> The same proposal cynically concluded that even though Castro would not know that the message came from Kennedy, the United States would probably have to give some assurances that it would not seek to overthrow the Cuban regime, “regardless of whether we intended to carry them out.”<sup>126</sup>

The secret message contained both a threat and a promise. If the missiles were not removed, “further steps will have to be taken against Cuba and very soon,” it warned. Appealing to Castro’s pride, the message continued: “Time is very short for Cuba and for Castro to decide whether to devote his great leadership abilities to the service of his Cuban peoples or to serving as a Soviet pawn in their desperately risky struggle for world domination by force and threat of force.” On the other hand, if Castro agreed to send the Soviets packing, the United States would not risk upsetting hemispheric solidarity by invading the island, and “changes in the relations between Cuba and the OAS countries, including the U.S., could flow.”<sup>127</sup> Kennedy approved the message, and on the afternoon of October 26, the State Department cabled it to the U.S. embassy in Rio.<sup>128</sup>

The joint U.S.–Brazilian initiative did not proceed as planned, much to the consternation of U.S. officials. Instead of entrusting the message to Washington’s preferred intermediary, the Brazilian ambassador to Cuba, Goulart chose as his messenger the new chief of the cabinet’s military department, whom U.S. observers regarded as pro-Communist and anti-American.<sup>129</sup> Adding to U.S. frustration, the Brazilian government leaked news of the mission to local journalists and to the *New York Times*, which published all the details of the effort except for the crucial aspect of U.S. involvement.<sup>130</sup> Ultimately, the Brazilians’ not-so-secret attempt to convince Castro to relinquish the missiles failed when the Cuban leader rejected the suggestion of international inspections and insisted upon the return of the Guantánamo Bay naval base.<sup>131</sup>

Goulart’s response to the missile crisis, even his cooperation with Kennedy’s covert effort to negotiate with Castro, backfired by engendering resentment rather than gratitude among U.S. officials. Intelligence analysts for the State Department complained that “the Brazilian official line abounded in equivocations and contradictions during the missile crisis.”<sup>132</sup> In a letter to Ambassador Gordon in mid-November, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Edwin M.

125. “Political Path,” October 25, 1962, Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited, NSA.

126. Memorandum for McGeorge Bundy from U. Alexis Johnson, “Proposed Message to Castro,” October 26, 1962, DNSA.

127. Ibid.

128. Hershberg, “The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis (Part 2).”

129. Ibid., 41, 44.

130. Juan de Onis, “Goulart Aide Flies to Cuba; Task Is Kept Secret,” *New York Times*, October 30, 1962.

131. Hershberg, “The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis (Part 2),” 46.

132. U.S. Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research, “Brazil and Cuban Missile Crisis,” November 5, 1962, DNSA.

Martin described Brazilian support during the crisis as “lukewarm and equivocal.” He complained that Brazil had offered no military or moral support to the quarantine, and “its prime minister found it desirable and appropriate, apparently for domestic political reasons to address personally and reassure a few hundred noisy pro-Castroites.”<sup>133</sup> Gordon agreed, commenting to the State Department that “Goulart has combined efforts to tranquilize us with continued good relations [with] domestic communist forces, [an] ambiguous international position, and [a] further series of bad appointments in key spots.”<sup>134</sup> During a meeting of the Executive Committee on December 11, Kennedy accepted the State Department’s recommendation to “seek to change the political and economic orientation of Brazilian President Goulart and his Government.”<sup>135</sup>

At the same time that Goulart’s response to the missile crisis injured his credibility on the international level, his inconsistent approach to policymaking also failed to shore up his legitimacy at home. The rifts in Brazil’s political scene had become so wide that increasing numbers of people on both sides of the spectrum refused to compromise and began urging antidemocratic solutions to the deadlock. The missile crisis was one of many controversial events and issues that exacerbated the polarization, illustrating how Goulart’s attempts to play multiple angles left him exposed to attacks from the left, right, and swiftly shrinking center. Political factions within Brazil used the missile crisis as an opportunity to criticize and undermine Goulart’s leadership. In the spring of 1964, the military staged a coup with U.S. approval and Goulart, left with no political base, fled to Uruguay.

### CONCLUSION

Across the Americas, the Cuban Missile Crisis prompted a variety of responses and consequences. Local political conditions combined with international alignments to produce reactions ranging from war mongering to attempted mediation. In the nations of Central America and the Caribbean, dictators tried to amplify the crisis to clamp down on domestic opposition and rid the region of Castro’s revolutionary intrigues. The Mexican government kept a tight lid on its domestic situation and managed to turn the crisis to its advantage by gaining the gratitude of U.S. leaders. Some South American governments enthusiastically joined the quarantine while struggling to quell local protests, and others endeavored to play a mediating role between Washington and Havana. Yet one thing that united the variety of responses was a common desire to use the missile crisis as an opportunity to alter the United States’ relationship with its neighbors.

133. Edwin M. Martin, “Brazilian Political Orientation,” November 15, 1962, President’s Office Files, Countries Brazil, box 112, folder 16, JFKL.

134. Lincoln Gordon, “Brazilian Financial Situation and Political Orientation,” November 20, 1962, *ibid.*

135. McGeorge Bundy, “NSC Executive Committee Meeting, December 11, 1962, 10:00 am, Meeting No. 35,” December 11, 1962, Cuban Missile Crisis, NSA.

The diverse efforts to leverage the missile crisis to change U.S.–Latin American relations met with various degrees of success and failure. The Mexican government and Argentine military were able to strengthen their ties with the United States, while Bolivian and Brazilian leaders' efforts to do the same were less fruitful in the long term. Somoza and Betancourt were unable to goad the United States into pursuing a more belligerent policy toward Castro; on the contrary, as part of the resolution of the missile crisis Kennedy pledged not to invade Cuba. In an OAS meeting in mid-November, the Nicaraguan and Venezuelan representatives joined a number of others in complaining about the Cuban "triumph"; they maintained that "far from discrediting Castro, the way that the crisis is being resolved is strengthening him."<sup>136</sup> The missile crisis also did not lead to a reduction in U.S. political and economic involvement in Latin America, much to the disappointment of the protestors who had mobbed U.S. embassies and sabotaged U.S. businesses.

There was, however, one unanimous Latin American response to the missile crisis that eventually had a successful outcome. The events of October 1962 drove home the danger of nuclear war for people across the Americas and prompted a truly hemispheric reaction. In April 1963, at the initiative of President López Mateos of Mexico, the presidents of five Latin American countries—Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, and Mexico—announced that they were prepared to sign a multilateral agreement that would make Latin America a nuclear weapon-free zone.<sup>137</sup> Nearly four years later, on February 14, 1967, leaders of fourteen countries gathered in Mexico City to sign the Treaty of Tlatelolco, voluntarily agreeing to prohibit the testing, use, production, acquisition, storage, installation, and deployment of nuclear weapons within their territories. The nuclear weapons-free zone came into effect in 1969 when the requisite number of countries ratified the treaty.<sup>138</sup> Even to this day it remains in effect. In 2002, forty years after the missile crisis, the last country in the Americas finally ratified the treaty: Cuba.

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136. Letter from Mexican Ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS) to Mexican Foreign Minister, 14 November 1962, in Ostermann and Hershberg, "The Global Cuban Missile Crisis at 50," 211.

137. Davis R. Robinson, "The Treaty of Tlatelolco and the United States: A Latin American Nuclear Free Zone," *The American Journal of International Law* 64, no. 2 (1970): 282–309.

138. Organismo para la proscripción de las armas nucleares en la América Latina y el Caribe (OPANAL), "El OPANAL," 2012, <http://www.opanal.org>.