

# Boundary Disputes in Latin America

**Jorge I. Domínguez**

with David Mares, Manuel Orozco,  
David Scott Palmer, Francisco Rojas Aravena,  
and Andrés Serbin



United States  
Institute of Peace

Peaceworks  
STPS

# Contents

<b>Summary</b>	5
<b>Foreword</b> <i>by Luigi R. Einaudi</i>	9
<b>Preface</b>	11
1. Introduction	13
2. The Dimensions of the Problem	18
3. Why So Little Warfare?	20
4. Why Did Territorial and Boundary Disputes Linger?	26
5. Is Democracy the Solution?	29
6. What Is to Be Done?	33
<b>Notes</b>	37
<b>About the Author</b>	43
<b>About the Institute</b>	45

## Summary

Since the start of 2000, five Latin American boundary disputes between neighboring states have resulted in the use of force, and two others in its deployment. These incidents involved ten of the nineteen independent countries of South and Central America. In 1995, Ecuador and Peru went to war, resulting in more than a thousand deaths and injuries and significant economic loss. And yet, by international standards the Americas were comparatively free from interstate war during the twentieth century. Latin Americans for the most part do not fear aggression from their neighbors. They do not expect their countries to go to war with one another.

The puzzle that this paper seeks to solve is how to explain the following unusual cluster of traits in the hemisphere:

- Territorial, boundary, and other disputes endure.
- Interstate conflict over boundaries is relatively frequent.
- Disputes sometimes escalate to military conflict because states recurrently employ low levels of force to shape aspects of bilateral relations.
- Such escalation rarely reaches full-scale war.
- Interstate war is infrequent indeed.

Solving this puzzle may help point the way toward more effective prevention and resolution of conflicts about borders and territory.

It is encouraging to note that some of the longest-lasting and most serious boundary disputes in South America have been settled since 1990—Argentina and Chile, Ecuador and Peru, Chile and Peru, Brazil and all its neighbors. At the same time, however, similar border disputes have been exacerbated in the cases of Guyana, Venezuela, and Colombia and in Central America. Each of this second set of countries has been involved in at least one militarized interstate dispute since 1990. Nicaragua tops the list, having had militarized disputes with four states. Venezuela and Honduras have each had militarized disputes with three neighboring states. El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, and Colombia have each had militarized disputes with two neighbors. Since 1990 militarized interstate disputes have been frequent, therefore, yet only the dispute between Ecuador and Peru in 1995 escalated to war.

This paper contends that the structures of the international systems in South and Central America and their somewhat distant relations to the global system, as well as the panoply of procedures and institutions evident in inter-American relations, explain the infrequency and short duration of interstate wars. More specifically, the paper advances the following arguments:

- ▶ Interstate war became rare thanks to a balance of power that developed in South America in the late nineteenth century. In Central America, U.S. intervention early in the twentieth century temporarily interrupted warfare.
- ▶ Interstate war remained rare because both South and Central America were relatively insulated from the wider international system.
- ▶ Innovative international regional institutions and procedures that began to develop in the nineteenth century and blossomed in the twentieth century fostered and consolidated interstate peace and provided effective international mediation when interstate war broke out.
- ▶ The ideology of a shared identity also fostered interstate peace. For a long time Latin Americans for the most part have not believed that their country's neighbor is their enemy.
- ▶ U.S. hegemony has been largely irrelevant to explaining the prospects of interstate war and peace in Latin America.
- ▶ Geography and poor cartography made it difficult to settle some boundary disputes. British decolonization in mainland Latin America is a persistent source of territorial disputes.
- ▶ Specific international procedures, especially the formal "freeze" of a dispute for a period of years and some international arbitral practices, helped old disputes linger.
- ▶ The change in international maritime law (the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas) and the development of new technology to exploit marine and seabed resources raised the salience of many territorial disputes.
- ▶ Inter-American peacekeeping institutions have been very effective, yet they also generate moral hazard. The peacekeeping norms, procedures, and institutions in inter-American relations produce public goods akin to insurance. They insure each member-state against the likelihood of protracted warfare. States can behave recklessly, militarizing disputes to serve domestic political objectives, certain that international agents will stop the fighting and thus prevent serious injury. States can also stubbornly resist making compromises over boundary disputes, equally certain that undesired outcomes will not be imposed on them. The common thread is that an international public good—international institutions and procedures—provides a kind of insurance that frees state actors from some of the prudential constraints ordinarily imposed by interstate competition.
- ▶ Democracy has a complex relationship to interstate war and peace. First, in some instances democratic practices and procedures directly intensified bilateral conflict between states over boundary or territorial issues. Second, in only one instance in Central America and the circum-Caribbean did democratization improve the prospects for territorial dispute settlement, although in South America democratic politics had a more salutary effect on peacemaking in the last two decades of the twentieth century. Third and most important, most of the time the existence of democratic practices and procedures or the process of democratization was unre-

lated to the evolution of boundary and territorial disputes. The democratic character of the political regime was causally related neither to dispute containment nor to dispute exacerbation.

- ▶ Grand strategies have an important effect on shaping the prospects for interstate war and peace. There is good reason to suspect that developmental objectives are the most important factor in distinguishing cases where boundary and territorial disputes are settled from those where they fester. Where development becomes the key concern of domestic elites, territorial and boundary dispute settlement is likely to follow as a by-product, provided thinking about development is directly linked to thinking about peace. These elites fashion grand strategies to accomplish these goals. In these instances, many boundary and territorial disputes are likely to be settled during a relatively short time. Where sovereignty, boundary, and territorial concerns are accorded higher priority than developmental objectives, conflict at the border will linger and perhaps worsen.
- ▶ International institutions and actors can tilt the balance of ideas and incentives toward development and employ their resources strategically to reduce the incidence of moral hazard while fostering interstate peace.

## Foreword

**B**order and territorial disputes have typically been perceived mainly as an unnecessary and wasteful obstacle to economic and social development in the Western Hemisphere. And it is certainly true, as this report suggests, that they are a drain on budgets and resources and regularly frustrate international cooperation on trade, environmental protection, security, and law enforcement. On occasion, some can also lead to armed conflict.

Less widely appreciated is that disputes over sovereignty are becoming more important as the conditions of life in the region are increasingly affected by new technologies, population growth, and the extension of new settlements into areas once largely unpopulated. As long as those areas were unpopulated or inaccessible, their boundaries could be disputed without immediate consequence, but as different groups come into increasing contact with one another, so territorial demarcation has become a pressing and practical concern.

The region's development has thus brought friction as well as progress. In 1995, an outbreak of intensive fighting between Ecuador and Peru led both countries to mobilize their military forces and prompted a regional diplomatic effort that included stationing a four-nation military observer force in the disputed area. In 1998, that territorial dispute, which originated in seventeenth-century Spanish colonial edicts, was definitively settled, but 1999 and 2000 saw the reemergence of a series of other long-standing disputes and the advent of a number of new controversies in Central America and in the northern part of South America. These disputes, and a few other latent ones, generally fall into one of two types: arguments over land boundaries that date from colonial times, and the much more modern maritime delimitation controversies that stem from changes in international maritime law and rivalries over the rich resources, real and imagined, of the world's oceans.

The role of facilitator, negotiator, and/or arbiter played by neutral third parties such as the Organization of American States (OAS) has long been recognized as an essential tool in conflict resolution. Since 1999, the OAS has helped to manage and even to resolve half a dozen different interstate issues in Central America. In 2000, the member states of the OAS established a mechanism, the Fund for Peace, to help finance the costs of proceedings when the parties involved agree to turn to the OAS for assistance in resolving their territorial disputes peacefully. This step was taken in recognition of new opportunities for third-party diplomacy and to counter the unfortunate reality that although small states may have the political will necessary for peacefully resolving disputes with their neighbors, they often lack the financial and human resources to do so.

This work by Jorge Domínguez and his colleagues contributes to the scarce scholarship on boundary disputes in the Western Hemisphere and will provide a useful reference for policymakers and governments as they seek to understand the causes of and remedies for border disputes. This report is particularly important because the time is ripe for progress.

In the first place, the hemisphere's governments have begun a process to review the security architecture of the Western Hemisphere. In the second place, border tensions need to be reduced as part of efforts to expand trade and deepen regional integration. The negotiation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas at the hemispheric level and of its subregional building blocks, such as the proposed Central American Free Trade Agreement, can only be complicated by the persistence of tension-inducing disputes, whether they be colonial legacies or modern differences over the Law of the Sea.

The hidden opportunity costs of lingering disputes between neighbors and the human and financial resources required for their peaceful resolution do not receive much public attention, but they surely constitute as critical a factor in the struggle against poverty and underdevelopment as do terrorism, organized crime, and the specter of conventional warfare. This timely volume should help to promote greater awareness not only of the toll exacted by these disputes but also of the need to resolve them peacefully and permanently.

AMBASSADOR LUIGI R. EINAUDI  
FORMER SENIOR STAFF MEMBER, INTER-AMERICAN DIALOGUE,  
AND SINCE JUNE 2000, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OAS

## Preface

**G**overnments, international organizations, scholars, and citizens everywhere should care when an imagined zone of peace—as Latin American interstate relations are at times portrayed—might seem to stumble into militarized conflict.

This publication is the result of a research project focusing on boundary disputes in Latin America and the Caribbean since the end of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. The spark for the project was the initiative of Luigi Einaudi, then a member of the Inter-American Dialogue staff in Washington, D.C., and currently assistant secretary general of the Organization of American States. The research phase of the project was supported by a generous grant from the United States Institute of Peace and the Inter-American Dialogue's general resources. The Inter-American Dialogue is both a forum for sustained exchange among public and private leaders from across the Americas and an independent, nonpartisan center for policy analysis on Western Hemisphere affairs. The dialogue organized and hosted this project, under the direction of Manuel Orozco.

David Mares, Manuel Orozco, Francisco Rojas Aravena, and Andrés Serbin presented preliminary drafts of their work at an Inter-American Dialogue conference, attended by ten Latin American ambassadors to the White House or to the Organization of American States, and by U.S. government officials, academics, and other experts, held in Washington, D.C., on February 26, 2001. David Mares (a professor at the University of California–San Diego) provided a comparative empirical analysis of interstate boundary disputes in the Americas. Manuel Orozco (director for Central America, Inter-American Dialogue) explored the record of such disputes in Central America. Francisco Rojas Aravena (director of the Faculty for Latin American Social Sciences—FLACSO-Chile) analyzed the processes whereby Argentina and Chile succeeded in settling all their boundary disputes during the 1990s. Andrés Serbin (director of the Centre for Global and Regional Studies, University of Belgrano, Argentina) assessed the record of the dispute between Guyana and Venezuela and the factors that exacerbated it, especially in the late 1990s and the years that followed.

Domínguez subsequently wrote a draft that drew on this excellent work and his own independent research. This set of papers was published in *Pensamiento Propio* 14 (July–December 2001). For his part, David Scott Palmer (a professor at Boston University) had published a case study of the Ecuador–Peru dispute in *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 12, no. 2 (June 2001): 29–46. As part of the Inter-American Dialogue endeavor, Palmer updated this work. Domínguez then took into account Palmer's work and the revised work of other authors, and substantially rewrote and expanded his own contribution. The result is this publication. Domínguez alone should be held responsible for all errors in this work, but on the title page he explicitly acknowledges his large intellectual debt to his colleagues in this enterprise.



Domínguez is also grateful to the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs and the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, both at Harvard University, for research support, and to Kathleen Hoover for splendid assistance in this and other projects. An earlier draft of this work was also presented for discussion at an Olin Institute seminar at the Weatherhead Center; Domínguez is grateful to seminar participants for their comments and especially to Nisha Fazal for her insightful observations and suggestions. He also thanks Jacques Hymans for comments on yet another early version and Nigel Quinney, United States Institute of Peace, for his thoughtful and constructive editorial work. All mistakes are Domínguez's alone.

## Introduction

Latin American countries are approaching the bicentennial of the start of their wars of independence from Spain and Portugal, yet they still face more than a dozen unresolved territorial and boundary disputes. Since the start of 2000, five disputes have resulted in the use of force, and two others in its deployment. These incidents have involved ten of the nineteen independent countries of South and Central America. Anglophone and Dutch Caribbean countries as well as the United States and Canada also face several unresolved disputes, although these are rarely or never militarized. In 1995, Ecuador and Peru went to war, resulting in more than a thousand deaths and injuries and significant economic loss. The number of country dyads affected by territorial disputes in the second half of the twentieth century was about the same in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East, and East and Southeast Asia; only Africa had a larger number of such conflict dyads.<sup>1</sup>

And yet, by international standards the Americas were comparatively free from interstate war during the twentieth century. Latin Americans for the most part do not fear aggression from their neighbors. They do not expect their countries to go to war with each other and are surprised when interstate violence breaks out at the border. The puzzle is how to explain the following unusual cluster of characteristics and how to think about steps toward conflict prevention and resolution. The hemisphere is marked by the following characteristics:

- ▶ Territorial, boundary, and other disputes endure.<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ Interstate conflict over boundaries is relatively frequent.
- ▶ Disputes sometimes escalate to military conflict because states recurrently employ low levels of force to shape aspects of bilateral relations.
- ▶ Such escalation rarely reaches full-scale war.
- ▶ Interstate war is infrequent indeed.

The argument in this work is that the structures of the international systems in South and Central America and their somewhat distant relations to the global system, as well as the panoply of procedures and institutions evident in inter-American relations, explain the infrequency and short duration of interstate wars. (References to “war” and “peace” pertain exclusively to interstate relations, unless otherwise noted.) Boundary and territorial disputes still exist, however. Some linger from the distant past; others emerged as a consequence of relatively recent developments, such as the revision of the international law of the sea extending maritime jurisdiction out to two hundred miles and the discovery of new means to exploit marine and seabed resources.

The same inter-American institutions, procedures, and habits of state behavior that keep wars infrequent and brief also generate moral hazard. By “moral hazard” we call attention to two related types of interstate behavior: States can behave recklessly, militarizing disputes to serve domestic political objectives, certain that international agents will intervene to stop the fighting before the situation escalates to war. States can also stubbornly resist making compromises over boundary disputes, equally certain that undesired outcomes would not be imposed on them. The common thread is that an international public good—international institutions and procedures—provides a kind of insurance that frees state actors from some of the prudential constraints ordinarily imposed by interstate competition.

This work explores the persistence of territorial and boundary disputes in Latin America, focusing on the years since 1990, that is, since the Cold War ended between the United States and the Soviet Union. It seeks to explain why since 1990 some of the longest-lasting and most serious boundary disputes in South America<sup>3</sup> have been settled—between Argentina and Chile, Ecuador and Peru, Chile and Peru, Brazil and all its neighbors—while similar border disputes have been exacerbated in the cases of Guyana, Venezuela, and Colombia and in Central America. Each of this second set of countries has been involved in at least one militarized interstate dispute since 1990. (In this work, a “militarized dispute” is a conflict between states where one side employs or deploys military force as an instrument of policy to advance its objectives.) Nicaragua tops the list, having had militarized disputes with four states. Venezuela and Honduras have each had militarized disputes with three neighboring states. El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, and Colombia have each had militarized disputes with two neighbors. Since 1990 militarized interstate disputes have been frequent, therefore, yet only the dispute between Ecuador and Peru in 1995 escalated to war.

### Differing Approaches to Investigating Boundary Disputes

Scholarship on boundary and territorial disputes worldwide employs various approaches. Much fruitful work has developed through large-scale statistical studies. These studies establish a key reason to study such disputes: “Territorial disputes increased the probability of war and have a higher probability of [leading states] to war than other kinds of disputes.”<sup>4</sup>

Our project used a comparative case-based, rather than a large-scale statistical, approach. We chose cases where disputes are either still quite active or have been recently settled in order to learn from both kinds. A case-based, time-limited approach helps to explain patterns of boundary disputes in Latin America and to show why the region’s patterns differ somewhat from regularities found in statistical studies.

This is not, of course, to say that statistical analyses are unhelpful. On the contrary, they have brought out some intriguing features of the Latin American experience. Consider, for example, Paul Hensel’s findings in his fine study of patterns in “all” territorial disputes in the Western Hemisphere between 1816 and 1992.<sup>5</sup> Hensel finds that all the following seemingly contradictory relationships are statistically significant (words such as “claim” or “dispute” refer exclusively to boundary or territorial issues):

1. The more salient the claim, the more likely there will be bilateral negotiations.
2. The more salient the claim, the more likely there will be militarized conflict.
3. Prior unsuccessful attempts to settle a dispute are more likely to lead to new bilateral negotiations.
4. Prior unsuccessful attempts to settle a dispute are more likely to lead to new militarized conflict.
5. Militarized conflict is associated with prior unsuccessful attempts to settle a dispute.
6. Militarized conflict is associated with prior successful attempts to settle a dispute.
7. Militarized conflict is associated with the existence of rough parity between the disputants.
8. Militarized conflict is associated with the existence of a challenger state that is stronger than the target state.
9. Militarized interstate disputes increase the likelihood of war.
10. Militarized interstate disputes increase the likelihood of resorting to nonbinding third-party mediation.

The preceding list suggests the worth of supplementing a statistical approach with a case-based approach. At first blush, one could dismiss these statistically significant findings as being contradictory, empirically inconclusive, and analytically unhelpful. On closer inspection, intriguing inferences can be drawn. Consider the first two seemingly contradictory findings. They come together as follows: the higher the salience, the greater the urgency to settle the dispute by any means. Look at Hensel's findings from a different angle: except for the eighth one, all findings apply to the Ecuador-Peru dispute over the time span that he considered. In this sense, his findings are not contradictory at all but highlight the complexities of a single dyadic relationship. A comparative case-based approach can identify the combination of constraints and human actions that finally resolved the thicket of apparent contradictions highlighted—properly and usefully—in Hensel's statistical analysis.

Our findings also connect well to the wider literature of statistical or comparative case studies. For illustrative purposes, consider some of the links between our work and that of Paul Huth, the leading scholar of statistically based studies of territorial disputes, and between our work and one aspect of the work of Beth Simmons, a leading scholar of international relations who has written thoughtfully about some of the same Latin American cases as we have.

We concur with Huth on most analytical points. Like him, we believe that a history of unresolved territorial disputes before the mid-twentieth century increased the likelihood of active disputes since that time (the Central American cases). Our findings agree with his that political leaders are likely to have a strong base of domestic political support for continuing to pursue territorial claims by a combination of confrontational diplomatic or military policies whenever there is a long-term history of past conflict (the Venezuela-Guyana case).<sup>6</sup> All these findings point to a key insight: disputes are path dependent. With

regard to conflict resolution, we similarly find that common security ties generally mitigate conflict over territorial disputes and that challenger and target states are more likely to make concessions when they share common security ties (the Argentina-Chile case).<sup>7</sup>

On the other hand, Huth's work does not explain well the consolidation and deepening of interstate peace throughout most of South America in the 1990s. He finds that "international political and military variables were the principal factors pushing state leaders toward a settlement." That does not accord with our findings regarding active peacemaking between Argentina and Chile in the 1990s nor, more generally, with Brazil's peaceful international behavior toward its neighbors. Nor does the peaceful negotiated settlement of the Ecuador-Peru dispute in the late 1990s accord with Huth's finding that "disputes involving issues of . . . the recovery of lost national territory were generally not settled by compromise."<sup>8</sup>

The reason for the discrepancy in findings between our work and Huth's is both clear and important: Huth's work focuses on worldwide statistical regularities. Our case-based approach highlights a stunning exception to those regularities at the end of the last millennium: the construction of a South American zone of peace between states. The salience of our finding is all the clearer thanks to his pioneering work. Statistical analyses are not about finding oddballs. A comparative case-based approach, in contrast, can focus on the tail end of the distribution—the happy turn of events in South American peacemaking.

Beth Simmons, in one of her projects, seeks to explain why governments in some instances delegate decision-making authority over territorial issues to international institutions, focusing on the impact of democracy on the willingness to rely on international institutions. She finds no statistical relationship between the presence of a "democratic pair" (both sides to the dispute are under constitutional democracy) and the likelihood of committing to international arbitration. Nor was the presence of a democratic regime statistically associated with greater compliance with international arbitral decisions. These statistical findings are consistent with our conclusions that the relationship between democratic politics, on the one hand, and the management of territorial and boundary disputes, on the other, is exceedingly complex. There is often no relationship between them. Our research also supplies illustrations that support (Ecuador-Peru) as well as oppose (Argentina-Chile on the southern glaciers boundary) one of Simmons's findings, namely, that democratic governments "will only negotiate in the range of agreements that they know can be accepted by their domestic constituency."<sup>9</sup> In sum, the combination of statistical and comparative case materials enriches both approaches.

### Three Flawed Hypotheses

More generally, as we look over mainstream scholarly, journalistic, and political commentary pertaining to interstate war and peace in the Americas, we are struck by the salience of three plausible but flawed hypotheses:

- The Cold War helped to manage boundary and territorial disputes. The Cold War's effect subordinated those disputes to wider international issues. To achieve such an outcome, the United States helped to resolve some disputes and kept others peaceful.

- ▶ Conflict over boundary issues would intensify once U.S.-Soviet conflicts waned. A distracted U.S. government would pay attention to other issues or continents; U.S.-brokered conflict resolution outcomes would become less frequent in Latin America. Latin American governments would be free at last to advance classic international state objectives.
- ▶ Democracies are highly unlikely to go to war with each other. Democracies settle boundary disputes between themselves peacefully and do not resort to militarized means. A great wave of democratization washed over Latin America's shores from the end of the 1970s to the start of the 1990s. The period since 1990 is the first in Latin America's history when every country on the mainland has been a constitutional democracy. International peace follows from democracy.

The analysis shows that these hypotheses do not account for the patterns of militarized conflict over boundaries or the prospects for their settlement in Latin America.

## The Dimensions of the Problem

Territorial and boundary disputes in the Americas seem to operate in a domain of their own. As David Mares has demonstrated, the existence of such disputes is unrelated to many other significant issues. No clear pattern associates the existence of a boundary dispute in Latin America with a decreasing level of economic cooperation or human development or with democratic instability. Boundary-related conflict occurs even between partners to preferential trade agreements.<sup>10</sup>

The relationship between the existence of territorial and boundary disputes, on the one hand, and war, on the other, is also complex. The United States undertook the largest deployments of military force in the Americas in the twentieth century, including its military occupations of various southern neighboring countries, intervention in the Mexican revolution early in the twentieth century, and, more recently, the invasion of Panama in 1989 and the military occupation of Haiti in 1994. These events were generally unrelated to boundary or territorial issues. The bloodiest conflict between two Latin American countries in the twentieth century—the 1937 massacre of tens of thousands of Haitian migrants by Dominican Republic forces—was also unrelated to boundary issues. Many current boundary disputes, Mares has also noted, are inactive. Since 1990, only just over half of the Latin American conflict dyads became militarized for reasons related to boundary or territorial disputes. Nor does the existence of such disputes explain the relative defense burden levels borne by Latin American countries.

Ten of the sixteen disputes between Latin American and Caribbean countries remain active. These account for all the militarized interstate behavior noted earlier. All but two militarized interstate disputes between 1990 and 2002 involved Latin American and Caribbean countries with boundary disputes—a finding consistent with worldwide patterns.<sup>11</sup> The existence of such disputes has thus generally been a necessary though not a sufficient condition for militarization in the relations between these states. For the countries in Central America and the circum-Caribbean, territorial and boundary disputes pose risks of militarized confrontation. The frequency of militarized disputes between them increased in the 1990s and remained high as the twenty-first century opened.

The most serious interstate conflicts involving Latin American or Caribbean countries in the last third of the twentieth century were directly related to territorial or boundary disputes. War broke out over territorial issues in 1969 between El Salvador and Honduras (although this war was also strongly motivated by a migration dispute), in 1982 between Argentina and the United Kingdom, and in 1995 between Ecuador and Peru. The next most severe disputes short of war also featured territorial or boundary causes: near-war between Argentina and Chile in 1978; tense relations between Chile, on the one hand, and Bolivia and Peru, on the other, in the late 1970s; and a naval clash between Colombia and Venezuela in 1987.



Each of the three instances of British colonial advance after Spanish-American independence remains a source of a serious territorial dispute. These are the disputes between Argentina and the United Kingdom over the South Atlantic islands, between Venezuela and Guyana over half of Guyana's territory, and between Guatemala and Belize over the latter's very independence. The circumstances of the Venezuela-Guyana and Guatemala-Belize disputes became more conflict ridden in the late 1990s and early 2000s. On February 7, 2003, however, Belize and Guatemala agreed on procedures to cool off their dispute, develop confidence-building measures, and decrease the likelihood of militarization, yet the dispute persists.<sup>12</sup> In brief, only four grave nonmaritime territorial disputes remain active in the Americas.<sup>13</sup> Three of these four are legacies from the British Empire (the fourth is landlocked Bolivia's search for an outlet to the Pacific Ocean, which might be settled through adjustments short of territorial cessions).

Three of these four grave territorial disputes are highly salient for the weaker countries in these dyads. Bolivia incurs opportunity costs. Its prospects for economic development would improve if it had direct access to the sea—a problem of forgone development it shares with landlocked countries worldwide.<sup>14</sup> Belize and Guyana also incur opportunity costs. International investment in both these countries has been deterred to some extent because of the uncertainty from festering militarized disputes. As Andrés Serbin has shown, in 2000 Guyana also incurred direct costs when the U.S. firm Beal Aerospace Technologies canceled its planned development project because of Venezuelan threats on Guyana if the project were to go forward.<sup>15</sup>

These disputes between some Latin American and Caribbean countries also had an effect on the wider international relations of the Americas. Anglophone Caribbean countries have rallied to the defense of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Belize and Guyana. From time to time, relations have been tense between the Anglophones and Guatemala and Venezuela. In recent decades, the United Kingdom has been compelled to retain a military defense commitment to Belize for far longer than the U.K. government has wished in order to protect its former colony's independence. The Central American Common Market collapsed when Honduras and El Salvador went to war in 1969. Integration efforts among Central American countries since the second half of the 1990s faltered because of the greater frequency and severity of their interstate disputes related to boundary and territorial issues.

In short, territorial and boundary disputes still threaten the peace and impede the prospects for cooperation in Central America and the circum-Caribbean area. Fortunately, they have come to matter much less in relations between South American countries and more generally in U.S.-Latin American relations.



## Three

### Why So Little Warfare?

Latin America has seen war relatively infrequently since the late nineteenth century, although wars had been common before then.<sup>16</sup> Three key characteristics of this international system explain the rarity of war. The first is the structure of the international system in South and Central America. An effective balance of power sustained South America's peace after the 1880s, and U.S. occupation of Nicaragua in the early twentieth century temporarily stopped Central America's wars.<sup>17</sup>

In South America, warfare was frequent and at times devastating from the 1830s to the early 1880s. South America's last war of the nineteenth century, the War of the Pacific (Chile versus Bolivia and Peru), ended in 1883. Thereafter, no war broke out until the 1930s. A balance of power system anchored in successful deterrence developed in South America during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first third of the twentieth. The ententes between Brazil and Chile, on the one hand, and Argentina, Bolivia, and Peru, on the other, anchored this balance of power system. States assessed their relative capabilities effectively and interacted continuously with, and deterred, one another. The consolidation of this system is one important explanation for the low incidence of warfare among South American states.<sup>18</sup>

South America saw only five wars during the last seventy years of the twentieth century. Three of these broke out in the 1930s: Bolivia and Paraguay fought over the Chaco area, Peru and Colombia over the Leticia region, and Peru and Ecuador over the Zarumilla region. As noted earlier, Argentina and the United Kingdom went to war in 1982, and Ecuador and Peru again in 1995. The number of casualties was characteristically between 500 and 1,500 battlefield deaths (except for the war over the Chaco, with about 100,000 deaths). The duration of these wars was measured typically in weeks, except for the much longer Chaco War and the 1939–41 Ecuador-Peru war.

Central America experienced more sustained though lower-intensity armed conflict during the nineteenth century. It suffered about seven thousand battlefield deaths—approximately equal to 5 percent of its population—in intermittent warfare between 1824 and 1842.<sup>19</sup> Central America witnessed several large-scale wars in both the late nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century. (The 1969 war between El Salvador and Honduras was brief but produced several thousand deaths.) The United States occupied Nicaragua militarily from 1912 to 1933 (except for an interlude in 1925–27) and thereby interrupted this pattern of warfare. No state would challenge U.S.-occupied Nicaragua.<sup>20</sup> The U.S. occupation of Nicaragua temporarily stopped wars in Central America but did not settle the underlying conflicts.

A second characteristic of the international system in South and Central America is its relative insulation from the global international system. The decision of the United Kingdom to interpose its fleet to prevent the reconquest of Latin America by continental Euro-

pean powers in the 1820s (with a small assist in 1823 from the U.S. issuance of the Monroe Doctrine, to the same effect) set the basis for this insulation.<sup>21</sup> European powers went to war against Latin American governments at various times in the nineteenth century, most dramatically in the 1860s when France occupied Mexico and Spain reoccupied the Dominican Republic. And, as noted previously, the United Kingdom seized bits of territory from Argentina, Guatemala, and Venezuela. But no Latin American country was re-colonized for long, and no country had major losses of territory to European powers.<sup>22</sup>

Thanks in part to such exogenous political factors and in part to sheer geographic distance, Latin American governments founded and fomented a multilayered international system. The layers included their relations with their immediate neighbors, their relations in a wider subregion (e.g., southern South America, Central America), their continental relations with one another and with the United States (and, especially since the late 1980s, with Canada), and their participation in the global system. Their relative insulation from the global system enabled most Latin American countries to avoid entanglements in wars beyond the Americas.<sup>23</sup>

A third source of war containment was institutional and ideological. The first institutional innovation was the legal principle of *uti possidetis juris*: states won the right to keep what the predecessor colony had possessed. Existing inherited administrative boundaries from the Spanish and Portuguese empires were converted into international frontiers. This legal principle became a useful focal point for the management of territorial and boundary disputes in the immediate aftermath of independence in the first half of the nineteenth century. Given immense geographic spaces, seemingly insurmountable barriers such as the Andean mountains or the extensive dense tropical forests that filled much of Central and South America, state leaders with limited resources found it cost-effective to honor and rely on *uti possidetis* to address most border issues.

To be sure, considerable postcolonial warfare surfaced in the aftermath of the breakdown of the Spanish empire, some of it affected by unclear boundaries. Yet the inherited administrative boundaries were sufficiently respected in practice in South America to contribute to the process of securing early on a framework of domestic and international legitimacy in the otherwise bloody passage from the Spanish empire to its successor American states.<sup>24</sup> In 1824, Central America became independent as a federation. *Uti possidetis* proved also an effective principle after the federation dissolved in 1838; the various Central American countries went to war with one another often but not for the most part to redraw boundaries between their states.

*Uti possidetis juris* held successfully over time, with six exceptions, the last of which occurred in 1941.

- The effect of war between Argentina and Brazil in 1825–28 created an independent Uruguay as a buffer state.
- The War of the Triple Alliance (1864–70), in which Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay defeated Paraguay, sharply reduced Paraguay's size.
- Chile undertook a successful war in 1879 against Bolivia and Peru (the War of the Pacific) to obtain the territories harboring the nitrate natural resources of southernmost Peru and littoral Bolivia. Bolivia lost its access to the sea.

- ▶ Ecuador lost much of its territory to its neighbors through wars (with Colombia in 1863 and Peru in 1939–41) or cession.
- ▶ Bolivia lost a significant fraction of its territory to Paraguay in the Chaco War (1932–35).
- ▶ Great Britain captured bits of territory from Argentina, Guatemala, and Venezuela at various times in the nineteenth century.

One important ideological innovation in early-nineteenth-century Latin America also helped to sustain interstate peace. Most Spanish American elites accepted the norm that they were part of a larger cultural and possibly political entity. Their countries should not go to war with one another. As Miguel Angel Centeno has written thoughtfully, “an elaborate discourse of international hatreds” was absent—my country’s neighbor is not my enemy.<sup>25</sup> Northern South America had become independent as Simón Bolívar’s Gran Colombia. Armies from northern and southern South America converged as allies to end colonial rule in today’s Peru and Bolivia. Central America became independent as a federation, as just noted. In fact, these ideological pretensions and concomitant integrative schemes failed throughout the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century.<sup>26</sup> Yet the habits of thought persisted and were no doubt strengthened in response to the rise of U.S. power. An influential manifesto for this unifying Latin Americanist idea was José Enrique Rodó’s *Ariel*, first published in February 1900 in direct response to U.S. victory over Spain in 1898 and to the alarming Latin American “nordomania” provoked by the growing power and influence of U.S. industry and culture.<sup>27</sup>

Given the new international structures of war deterrence built in South and Central America by the second decade of the twentieth century, these reinvigorated ideological factors reinforced the peace through the creation of new inter-American procedures and institutions. As Manuel Orozco has shown, several boundary and territorial disputes were settled in Central America in the 1930s and early 1940s.<sup>28</sup> By the end of the 1950s a Central American Common Market had developed. The frequency and intensity of Central American interstate warfare over boundary and territorial issues dropped markedly as the twentieth century progressed, with the significant exception of the 1969 war between El Salvador and Honduras.

Other institutional innovations to contain conflict evolved on a continental scale, thereby reinforcing the norms of peace. Consider the attempts to sustain the peace during the troubled years of economic decline and depression, 1925–42, between the world wars. During those years, there were ten active war-prone international disputes in Central and South America. Thirty-five countries served as intermediaries to contain or settle those conflicts. Table 1 shows intermediary activity in South American and Middle American (Mexico, Central America, Spanish Caribbean) disputes.

Even at this early stage, an inter-American system of conflict resolution was emerging. South American governments did not just mediate in South America, nor were Middle American governments excluded from intermediary roles in South America. The United States played a limited role as an intermediary. The United States wielded enormous potential influence in Middle America, but it did not behave as a hegemon guaranteeing the peace in this subregion. The consequence of the spreading ideology of Latin American

**Table 1.** Intermediary Activity in South and Middle American Regions<sup>a</sup>

Intermediary Governments	Location of Dispute		Total
	South America	Middle America	
South American	15	3	18
Middle American	3	2	5
United States	5	2	7
European	5	0	5
Total	28	7	35

<sup>a</sup>“Middle American” refers to Mexico and the countries of Central America and the Spanish Caribbean.

Source: From J. Lloyd Meacham, *The United States and Inter-American Security, 1889–1960* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), 154–176.

solidarity, fostering peacemaking, was the evolution of the expectation and practice that countries from all the Americas should engage in conflict containment and conflict settlement wherever conflict emerged.

In the late 1940s, these notions facilitated the construction of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Inter-American Peace Committee, tasked with conflict containment and resolution. In the wake of World War II, the OAS was imbued by ideological notions of solidarity in the Americas and constructed upon *uti possidetis juris* a strong claim on behalf of the territorial integrity of existing states—principles that would also be the basis for the foundation of the United Nations. After 1945, South and Central American and Caribbean countries remained fully engaged as intermediaries in dispute settlement throughout the hemisphere.<sup>29</sup> U.S. participation remained about the same. (European intermediary activity declined.)<sup>30</sup> These inter-American institutions played a role at times in war prevention, but more important was the role they played in containing wars or militarized disputes once these broke out. In the second half of the twentieth century, the OAS was more effective than the Organization of African Unity, the Arab League, and the United Nations in addressing the outbreak of wars and other international crises in their respective domains.<sup>31</sup>

The institutions and procedures concerned with peacemaking include but are not limited to those of the OAS. For example, the management of war and peace between Ecuador and Peru depended principally on the intermediary role of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and the United States. In 1942, these four governments signed on as guarantors of the treaty (the Rio Protocol) that ended a war between Ecuador and Peru. Article 5 of that treaty obligated the guarantors to play an ongoing role until the Peru-Ecuador boundary was demarcated definitively. The guarantors would play key roles in preventing a long war in 1981 and in brokering a permanent settlement between Ecuador and Peru in the late 1990s. In effect, the Rio Protocol “institutionalized the role of outsiders in the Ecuador-Peru dispute,” mandating a “multilateral commitment to [achieve] bilateral settlement.”<sup>32</sup> That role ended in May 1999, when the last boundary marker was set in place.

In contrast, one commonly cited source of war prevention and containment turns out to be a myth. Mares has examined whether the pattern of use of force in Latin America results from the unique influence of the United States throughout the twentieth century. Has U.S. hegemony maintained the peace? Has militarized conflict intensified when the United States failed to patrol the region? Or, even worse, has the United States stimulated conflicts? Mares's answer to these questions is no.<sup>33</sup>

A comparison of recent cases supports the proposition that U.S. hegemony has been irrelevant in explaining the prospects of war and peace in Latin America. War broke out in 1969 between Honduras and El Salvador at the end of the decade of the Alliance for Progress, when U.S. influence in Central America was at its apogee. It broke out in 1982 between Argentina and the United Kingdom when both governments considered themselves close U.S. allies in the Cold War. And it broke out again in 1995 between Peru and Ecuador at a time of unchallenged U.S. power worldwide. Consider the high point of U.S. hegemonic exertion: Central America in the 1980s. As Manuel Orozco has shown, the fiercely anticommunist Reagan administration could not persuade its ideological soul mates in Guatemala to forgo the territorial dispute with Belize when the latter became independent from the United Kingdom in 1981. Between 1980 and 1985, a Mixed Commission (created in 1980) worked to settle the remaining boundary and territorial disputes between Honduras and El Salvador, the U.S. government's closest Central American allies during a time of intense conflict in the region; yet the commission failed.<sup>34</sup>

To illustrate the salience of these arguments, the Latin American experience can be compared to that of another region where interstate war has been relatively rare, namely, the post-1960 experience of independent sub-Saharan Africa. Institutional innovations borrowed in part from Latin America and international interposition helped to found and sustain autonomous systems of continental international relations in both Latin America and Africa.<sup>35</sup>

First, in the 1960s the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, and the interests of individual African states, contributed to enshrine that Latin American innovation, *uti possidetis juris*, in Africa as well. Independent sub-Saharan Africa's boundaries changed remarkably little during the last four decades of the twentieth century, and those changes that did occur can be understood as instances of continuing peaceful decolonization, namely, the independence of Eritrea from Ethiopia (the only case of war) and Namibia from South Africa, and the separation of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde. In comparison, *uti possidetis* was violated much more in South America through the wars just mentioned. Postindependence Africa has suffered many wars, but they are mainly civil wars with external intervention; only Somalia's unsuccessful war on Ethiopia in 1977–78 was intended to redraw the boundary and annex territory. (Remarkably, *uti possidetis* held as well in the territorial succession of the former Soviet Union and even in the former Yugoslavia, despite several bloody wars.)

Second, the Cold War's effect on interstate peace in Africa until 1990 was similar to the interposition of the British fleet between Latin America and the rest of Europe in the 1820s. Non-African powers did not launch new wars of territorial conquest, and existing African states succeeded in deterring hostile neighbors thanks in part to their foreign patrons.

In conclusion, in the late nineteenth century the likelihood of warfare declined in South America as a consequence of the creation of a balance of power that deterred war. The frequency of warfare declined in Central America during the first quarter of the twentieth century because the United States stopped the cycle of war; the Central American subsystem remained unstable because many underlying disputes were unaddressed. The likelihood of war declined throughout Latin America thanks to the region's relative insulation from the global system. Finally, institutional innovations—*uti possidetis juris*, international mediation by willing countries or subsets of countries, and the creation of formal inter-American institutions—and the persistence of an ideology of shared Latin Americanism helped to contain war and militarized disputes during the second quarter of the twentieth century. These ideas and institutions are similar to what Mark Zacher has called the “territorial integrity norm” that has come to characterize the world since the end of World War II.<sup>36</sup> Yet these developments occurred in Latin America sooner than in Western Europe or in the international system at large; they emerged and strengthened prior to and independent from the region's democratization in the late twentieth century. Indeed, Latin Americans were key worldwide pioneers of ideas and institutions that have succeeded in reducing the incidence of warfare and also in strengthening the expectation that neighboring countries will not go to war with each other. In this respect Latin Americans have been welcome rule setters for the international system. Most Latin Americans expect to live in peace with neighboring countries.



## Four

### Why Did Territorial and Boundary Disputes Linger?

#### Empirical Issues

The likelihood of war has declined, but territorial and boundary disputes still exist. Why? Some disputes are legacies from the nineteenth century, but most appeared for the first time, or in distinctly novel ways, in the last third of the twentieth century. The most numerous demarcation problems exist between Caribbean island states that have yet to delimit their maritime boundaries. These and most other maritime boundary disputes are not simple legacies of the past. Instead, the change in international maritime law leading to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas, extending zones of economic and environmental jurisdiction out to two hundred miles, created the need to draw these boundaries and provoked fresh disputes.

The development of new technologies for the exploitation of marine and seabed resources raised the salience and accorded urgency to the new need to delimit maritime boundaries.<sup>37</sup> The maritime dispute between Colombia and Venezuela over boundaries in the Gulf of Venezuela might have been settled, or would not have persisted in virulent form, without these developments. In 1941, these two countries resolved their land boundary differences; they did not envisage that decades later they would need to extend maritime delimitation two hundred miles from their coastlines. Nor was petroleum discovered in the Gulf of Venezuela's seabed until the 1960s.<sup>38</sup>

The territorial disputes between Venezuela and Guyana and between Guatemala and Belize are novel to some extent, too. They were activated as a by-product of decolonization. Venezuela and Guatemala had been unable to challenge the United Kingdom's dominion successfully, but they did not let independence go forward, in Guyana in 1966 and Belize in 1981, without pressing their claims. Venezuela and Guatemala had portrayed themselves as agents against colonialism. Independence for Guyana and Belize suddenly cast Venezuela and Guatemala as villains, seeking to prevent the self-determination of English-speaking Afro-American peoples in small countries.

Nevertheless, some disputes do linger from the nineteenth century, exhibiting path-dependent features common to boundary disputes worldwide.<sup>39</sup> Several factors explain such endurance. One is geography. Tropical rainforests in South and Central America long made it physically difficult and logistically complex and costly to demarcate boundaries. Inaccurate maps have been part of the story of conflict reappearance, notably between Ecuador and Peru.<sup>40</sup> Another factor is the interruption of processes that might have led to permanent settlements. Reference has been made to the effect of the U.S. military occupation of Nicaragua early in the twentieth century. The United States did not resolve Nicaragua's disputes on the latter's behalf, nor could other governments in the region take on Nicaragua while the United States "protected" it. Disputes festered.

The process of peace maintenance has also had unexpected negative consequences.<sup>41</sup> International mediation cooled many conflicts but did not solve them. Peace was sustained at a particular juncture by deferring the substantive settlement to an unspecified future. One example was the Beagle Channel dispute between Argentina and Chile. In 1971, both governments agreed to submit their dispute to the British monarch for arbitration. This decision was helpful at the time because the two governments were also political and ideological adversaries; Chile's President Salvador Allende headed a socialist-communist governing coalition while General Alejandro Lanusse led a military dictatorship in Argentina. But the dispute reappeared in full force when the United Kingdom issued its finding in 1977. The British judgment raised the dispute's salience, sharply focusing attention on it, and brought the two countries, both then under military government, to the edge of war in 1978.<sup>42</sup>

Certain techniques of dispute management have similar effects. The technique of "freezing" claims at a particular juncture generates contradictory effects. For example, as Francisco Rojas Aravena has shown, in 1855 Argentina and Chile signed a peace, friendship, trade, and navigation treaty that "froze" the respective boundary and territorial claims.<sup>43</sup> This useful agreement contained the conflict in the mid-nineteenth century but ensured that the substantive dispute would remain unresolved for decades. Andrés Serbin has also noted that Venezuela and Guyana signed the Protocol of Port of Spain in 1970, agreeing not to press claims regarding their dispute for the next twelve years. This protocol creatively calmed the roiled waters in 1970, but, as Serbin has shown, it advertised and scheduled a crisis a dozen years later. The conflict flared up when the protocol expired; it remains unresolved.<sup>44</sup>

### Analytical Issues

Inter-American peacekeeping institutions have worked more effectively than the United Nations and other international regional institutions. Their very efficacy, however, generates moral hazard. The peacekeeping norms, procedures, and institutions in inter-American relations produce public goods akin to insurance. They insure each member-state against the likelihood of protracted warfare but, in so doing, provide subtle incentives for reckless or obstreperous behavior by states short of provoking a war.

Moral hazard is at the core of an international system that features infrequent short wars and frequent militarized disputes. In achieving a laudable objective (keeping wars rare and brief) through guarantees against protracted war, the system generates incentives that make militarized disputes possible. A state may militarize its dispute with another as part of a strategy of coercive bargaining, certain that the risk of further escalation remains low because other American states will intervene. The dispute-militarizing state expects that other American states and inter-American institutions will stop the conflict before the victimized state retaliates, thereby reducing the direct costs of its aggression. The state that takes the militarizing initiative reduces its direct costs because it can militarize a dispute without having to mobilize significant military, economic, or other resources. The aggressor state may maintain otherwise normal economic and other nonmilitary relations because the "border incident" will be brief and minor; that is, the aggressor avoids opportunity costs in nonmilitary issue areas. The aggressor may even expect that to guarantee



the peace inter-American intermediaries will extract concessions from the state that it attacked. Therefore, the existence of an effective inter-American war-containment system permits aggressive behavior short of war and, depending on the behavior of intermediaries, may reward such aggression. These strategies may be especially valuable to states objectively weaker than those from which they seek concessions.

A related moral hazard problem explains intransigence as one mechanism for disputes to linger. States refuse to compromise, certain that the inter-American system will not compel them by force and that intermediaries will stop other states from imposing an outcome by force. In this instance, moral hazard leads neither to war nor to militarized disputes, but it explains why some disputes persist.

Ecuador's behavior toward Peru since the end of their war in 1942 exemplifies the first moral hazard problem. The weaker state, Ecuador, repeatedly challenged the stronger state through militarized action at the disputed border.<sup>45</sup> Nicaragua under Arnoldo Alemán's presidency (1995–2001) also illustrates this first moral hazard problem. Alemán's Nicaragua militarized its boundary disputes with all its neighbors. Relations between Venezuela and Guyana and especially at times between Guatemala and Belize exemplify the second moral hazard problem: all four states have adopted strategies of intransigence at key moments. For example, as the next section shows, in 1993 Belize stubbornly refused to adopt modest measures that would have made it more likely that Guatemala would accept its independence without major Belizean territorial cessions.

Domestic politics is one motivation for this long-lingering militarized dispute behavior. Such conflicts have typically lingered because there is domestic political support for continuing to contest the disputed territory—a well-established worldwide pattern.<sup>46</sup> Consequently, presidents authorize such actions to update their nationalist credentials, help their party in a difficult national election, placate officers in the armed forces, or rally popular support when they have lost it for other reasons. Militarizing disputes can be a cost-effective means of communicating international resolve and gaining support at home.

## Five

### Is Democracy the Solution?

**D**emocracy has many merits, but it does not guarantee the peace in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>47</sup> Ecuador and Peru fought each other for a week in 1981 and went to war in 1995 while civilian constitutional presidents, elected in free and competitive elections, governed them, as David Scott Palmer has written.<sup>48</sup> Democratic political processes in both countries had been obstacles to peace. Civilian politicians in both countries repeatedly used the unresolved border dispute for their own partisan purposes. Other militarized disputes took place in the 1990s and the early 2000s between the following Latin American and Caribbean democratic governments:

- ▶ Guatemala and Belize
- ▶ Guyana and Suriname
- ▶ Venezuela and Guyana
- ▶ Venezuela and Trinidad-Tobago
- ▶ Venezuela and Colombia
- ▶ Nicaragua and Colombia
- ▶ Nicaragua and Costa Rica
- ▶ Nicaragua and El Salvador
- ▶ Nicaragua and Honduras
- ▶ Honduras and El Salvador
- ▶ Honduras and Guatemala

This long list suggests that democratic politics could have fostered these militarized boundary and territorial disputes. For example, Serbin has reported that during Venezuela's 1982 presidential election campaign, the party in control of the presidency took advantage of the expiration of the Protocol of Port of Spain that had "frozen" Venezuela's dispute with Guyana to refurbish its nationalist credentials. Serbin has also shown, however, that most Venezuelan democratic governments did not resort to that strategy in their relations with Guyana and that, as Guyana democratized in the early 1990s, it sought to draw nearer to Venezuela. The intensification of the Venezuela-Guyana dispute in the late 1990s seems unrelated to their constitutional governments.<sup>49</sup>

As for Central America in the 1990s and thereafter, as Orozco has shown, democratic politics was unrelated to the evolution of the disputes between Nicaragua and Honduras, Honduras and El Salvador, and Nicaragua and El Salvador.<sup>50</sup> Consider, for example, the activation of the Nicaragua-Honduras dispute in 1999. In 1985, Honduras negotiated a

treaty with Colombia to delimit its maritime jurisdiction and sovereignty over Caribbean islands, cays, and banks. Nicaragua under Sandinista National Liberation Front administration objected because it claimed some of the disputed space; the dispute abated when the Honduran president and Congress shelved the treaty draft. In 1999, Nicaragua under Liberal Party administration seemed about to negotiate a treaty with Jamaica over the same space that Honduras in part claimed. In anticipation, in November 1999 the Honduran Congress unanimously ratified the 1985 treaty with Colombia. Eight days later Nicaragua sued Honduras before the International Court of Justice.<sup>51</sup> Honduras and Nicaragua behaved as unified rational actors. Nicaragua's international behavior did not change even though the party in power and the political regime did. In 1985, the Honduran Congress did not differ with the president; in 1999, the Honduran Congress was unanimous, with the president's encouragement.

The effect of democratic politics on the management of the territorial dispute between El Salvador and Honduras in the 1990s and thereafter is also complex, as Orozco has shown. In 1969, after a riot at a binational soccer game, these two countries went to war over their disputed boundary and related cross-border migration issues—one of the most severe interstate wars in Latin American history. After protracted negotiations and third-party mediation, the International Court of Justice rendered a judgment in 1992, awarding about 80 percent of the disputed territory to Honduras. By this time, both countries had democratic political systems. Both governments accepted the court's judgment, yet militarized disputes between them recurred in the years that followed because they could not agree on boundary demarcation on the ground. The still-democratic governments returned to the International Court seeking guidance on implementation. In 1999, the court rendered another judgment. Both governments accepted it and have demarcated parts of the border under OAS auspices, yet militarized disputes have recurred each year since then. Democratic politics coexisted with both peacemaking and peace breaking.<sup>52</sup>

Democratic politics had a role, however, in impeding a settlement of the dispute between Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Domestic political opposition in Nicaragua made it difficult to make and keep agreements with Costa Rica. On the other hand, disputes between Nicaragua and Costa Rica predate the 1990s. Border dispute militarization had been part of the repertoire of international tactics at times employed by the Somoza family dictatorship in Nicaragua from the early 1930s to the late 1970s.

In the Guatemala-Belize dispute, Orozco has noted that, in 1993, Guatemala's constitutional president, Ramiro de León Carpio, withdrew the recognition of Belize's independence issued by his predecessor, Jorge Serrano, in 1991.<sup>53</sup> (Serrano had been forced to resign after his attempt to stage a coup against the Congress, the courts, and the political parties failed.) This withdrawal of recognition for Belize's independence took place in the midst of the process of redemocratization and arguably related to it as a means to gain support for the new government. As those events were taking place in Guatemala, on June 30, 1993, Belize's opposition party, the United Democratic Party, won the national elections. The new prime minister, Manuel Esquivel, moved to suspend the agreement that had been essential for obtaining Guatemala's earlier recognition of independence. Esquivel was honoring public promises made during the election campaign. Pressured by the U.S. and British governments, the Esquivel administration backed off enough to avoid

a more serious conflict. Nonetheless, in 1993 democratization in Guatemala and electoral politics in Belize no doubt exacerbated the bilateral Belize-Guatemala dispute.<sup>54</sup> On the other hand, at times democratic governments in Belize and Guatemala have also taken steps to contain and defuse the bilateral dispute, as their February 2003 agreement on confidence-building measures, noted earlier, exemplifies.

This comparative analysis shows, first, that in some instances democratic practices and procedures directly intensified bilateral conflict between states over boundary or territorial issues. The Ecuador-Peru wars and skirmishes, the Venezuelan election in 1982, and the Belizean election in 1993 are examples. Second, in only one instance in Central America or the circum-Caribbean did democratization improve the prospects for territorial dispute settlement, namely, Guyana's experience in the early 1990s. But, as we will see, democratic politics helped to settle the Ecuador-Peru dispute at last and fostered other boundary settlements in South America in the last two decades of the twentieth century. Third and most important, however, *most of the time* the existence of democratic practices and procedures or the process of democratization was unrelated to the evolution of boundary and territorial disputes. The democratic character of the political regime was causally related neither to dispute containment nor to dispute exacerbation—a finding convergent with the research findings of other scholars working on Latin America.<sup>55</sup>

Democratic politics has helped, however, to settle some of the most intractable territorial disputes in South America. Consider the final settlement of the Ecuador-Peru dispute in 1998. As Palmer has written, Ecuador lost much more than Peru but accepted the outcome. The reason is that Ecuadorian leaders conducted an active domestic diplomacy to explain their policies, consulted widely, and secured ratification before the treaty signing, even though this process slowed down the negotiations—a behavior consistent with what Beth Simmons has called “sophisticated negotiators.”<sup>56</sup> Ecuador's ratification of the treaty was especially impressive because its national legislature was deeply fragmented among many political parties and President Jamil Mahuad lacked a disciplined parliamentary majority. That very plurality of forces endowed its commitment with greater long-term credibility. Many Ecuadorian politicians, not just Mahuad's administration, became committed to peace.<sup>57</sup>

Relations between Argentina and Chile in the 1990s, Francisco Rojas Aravena has shown, also highlight the utility of democratic politics for definitive peacemaking. Democratization and the procedures and practices inherent to a democratic regime *can* be causally related to the resolution of boundary and territorial disputes. The 1984 Argentine-Chilean treaty concerning the Beagle Channel boundary and territories faced considerable opposition from the armed forces and others in Argentina. President Raúl Alfonsín chose to submit the treaty to a national plebiscite. The overwhelming support for the treaty registered in the plebiscite enabled the Argentine government to accept its loss in the Beagle Channel for the sake of a far greater long-term gain in interstate security and the prospects for economic cooperation with Chile.<sup>58</sup>

The negotiations begun in 1990 between Presidents Patricio Aylwin of Chile and Carlos Menem of Argentina to solve all twenty-four pending bilateral boundary and territorial disputes took place shortly after Chile's transition to democracy. Both presidents understood that active international conflict might make domestic civil-military relations

more difficult. The transition to democracy was just starting in Chile. Argentina had suffered three military mutinies in the mid- and late 1980s, and a fourth one in 1990.<sup>59</sup> Making peace would bolster the prospects for democratic consolidation.

The most controversial of the twenty-four extant disputes turned out to be the delimitation of the boundary through the southern cone glaciers. Although most disputes could be dealt with through executive agreement and implementation, the southern glaciers settlement required congressional ratification because the treaties in force did not provide sufficient guidance for demarcation. Argentine members of Congress from all political parties from Patagonia opposed the agreement; enough other parliamentarians supported them to force a renegotiation of the treaty. Chilean parliamentarians from the country's southern districts also opposed the treaty. The executives of both countries were compelled to redraft the treaty—a rather interesting example of the absence of Simmons's "sophisticated negotiators," albeit in a context of otherwise high bilateral diplomatic sophistication.<sup>60</sup> The respective national legislatures ratified the new version of the treaty, as Rojas Aravena has noted, although some parliamentarians voted against the renegotiated treaty.<sup>61</sup> In this fashion, the initial congressional opposition, consistent with democratic practices, led to a superior outcome: the settlement was legitimated by the consent of the people's elected representatives in Congress, not just the respective presidents. Because this boundary segment was the last to be settled between Argentina and Chile, legislative ratification also usefully supplemented a prior general political endorsement of boundary settlements that the executives had carried out. Democratic procedures strengthened the credibility of commitments to peace.

Mansfield and Snyder have argued that "states in the initial stages of democratization are especially prone to become involved in wars" because they succumb readily to the politics of competitive nationalist agitation and outbidding.<sup>62</sup> That finding seems more apt for South America before 1990 but, fortunately, not for the region as it has become. Democratic political leaders in some of the region's most fragile democracies were able to reimagine the political prospects for peace and act effectively to bring it about.

Democracy is not an automatic or mechanical cure-all for interstate disputes in Latin America and the Caribbean. In most instances, the existence of democracy or its practices and procedures is unrelated to the trajectory of boundary and territorial disputes. But the Argentine-Chilean experience demonstrates how in some instances the procedures of democracy can contribute to enduring and legitimate international settlements.

## What Is to Be Done?

As long as boundary and territorial disputes exist in splendid isolation from broader thinking about a country's long-term interests, disputes are likely to linger and at times to worsen bilateral relations. Boundary and territorial disputes are most likely to be settled in Latin America and the Caribbean, Mares has argued, as part of a grand strategy, that is, a foreign policy designed to identify how specific policies can enhance a country's ability to mobilize internal and external resources to promote its security and prosperity.<sup>63</sup> The absence of a grand strategy makes it possible for a festering boundary dispute to infect bilateral relations that might otherwise have improved.

Argentina and Chile in the 1990s exemplified such a grand strategy. Rojas Aravena has provided an extended illustration in his work.<sup>64</sup> Presidents Aylwin and Menem settled not just one or a couple of the remaining disputes but all of them. They not only dealt with boundary and territorial issues but sought simultaneously to extend and deepen a host of bilateral relations—an approach to conflict resolution that evinces substantial worldwide success.<sup>65</sup> To advance their joint interests, Argentina and Chile built formal and informal political, military, diplomatic, and economic relations; they increased bilateral trade and investment dramatically. The two governments rethought their fundamental interests comprehensively, joining peace and development. (In 1999, Chile and Peru also settled the final procedures for full implementation of the treaties of 1883 and 1929 that had ended the War of the Pacific, giving Peru facilities in the Chilean port of Arica and further advancing the prospects for peace along Chile's borders.)<sup>66</sup>

Brazil had been the first Latin American country to develop such a grand strategy to orient its international behavior. The Barão do Rio Branco, Brazil's foreign minister of the early twentieth century, designed a policy to address and, where possible, resolve Brazil's boundary and territorial disputes with its neighbors. Brazil developed Latin America's first corps of skilled professional diplomats. Building on the success of its foreign policy during the early decades of the twentieth century, Brazil sought to institutionalize three key goals:

- to sustain the peace;
- to expand Brazilian territory greatly without relying on military force or triggering an encircling coalition of Lusophobe neighbors (between 1816 and 1980, Brazil ranked twenty-first among the countries most involved in territorial changes and twenty-second among those that resorted to war over such changes—but it ranked third in greatest gain of area);<sup>67</sup> and
- to connect its boundary settlement policies with economic and social development strategies.



Brazil's policies toward Argentina during the last quarter of the twentieth century illustrate these features. Tense bilateral relations might have led to war in the late 1970s. In 1979, the two governments reached agreement over the development of the hydroelectric resources of the Paraná River system. Brazil made some concessions to improve relations and prospects for development. The years that followed helped to resolve the bilateral disputes between the two countries, culminating in 1991 in the Treaty of Asunción, which established the southern common market (MERCOSUR). Brazil, the country with the largest number of land neighbors in the Americas, began the twenty-first century with only one—largely inactive—boundary dispute (with Uruguay).<sup>68</sup> The experiences of Brazil since the early twentieth century and of countries in the southern cone more generally in the late twentieth century demonstrate that grand strategies can be instruments for settling boundary and territorial disputes.

Some grand strategies also exacerbate disputes, however. Serbin has noted that the deterioration in the relations between Guyana and Venezuela at the end of the 1990s was a function of the “geopolitical” approach endorsed by Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez, a grand strategy that gives priority to a concern with sovereignty, boundaries, and territory and that subordinates economic issues to those other objectives.<sup>69</sup>

Grand strategies in Latin America thus vary according to the relative priority accorded to economic and social development concerns. Grand strategies focused on a country's long-term development are likely to foster the peaceful settlement of boundary and territorial disputes. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the adoption of these grand strategies in Latin America seemed more likely under democratic regimes. And Latin America's success in this regard outperformed the worldwide record.<sup>70</sup> Grand strategies focused on political and military issues are likely to exacerbate such disputes.

To restate this key point, there is good reason to suspect that developmental objectives are the most important factor in distinguishing cases where boundary and territorial disputes are settled from those where they fester. Where development becomes the key concern of domestic elites, territorial and boundary dispute settlement is likely to follow as a by-product provided thinking about development is directly linked to thinking about peace. These elites fashion grand strategies to accomplish these goals.<sup>71</sup> In these instances, many boundary and territorial disputes are likely to be settled during a relatively short time, as in the case of Brazil's boundaries early in the twentieth century or between Argentina and Chile in the 1990s. Where sovereignty, boundary, and territorial concerns are accorded higher priority than developmental objectives, conflict at the border will linger and perhaps worsen.

These reflections suggest ways to promote the settlement of some disputes in the Americas. International actors should tilt the balance of ideas and incentives toward development. International financial institutions can shape the thinking about, and enable the implementation of, developmentally oriented grand strategies.<sup>72</sup> Governments, international business firms, nongovernmental organizations, churches, and international opinion makers can also contribute. The worldwide ideological transformation regarding the role of markets and the worth of democracy that occurred in the last fifth of the twentieth century is one result of these processes. Over time these same processes may help to make and consolidate the peace among states in Latin America and the Caribbean.

International economic resources should be held out to reward successful peacemaking efforts. Such rewards may help to overcome some moral hazard problems. The unwillingness to compromise over a boundary or territorial dispute may weaken if countries can realize explicit developmental gains as a result of a disposition to settle. Moreover, international financial institutions, private foundations, and governments should fund research to show direct and opportunity costs of repetitive militarized boundary disputes. Such research may be particularly valuable in Central America, where research capacities are few. The dissemination of this information may help persuade elites that militarizing disputes, as nearly all of this subregion's governments did in the 1990s, costs more than the analysis of moral hazard may suggest.

Yet, just thinking about the economic aspects of development will not settle boundary and territorial disputes. The point of a grand strategy is to connect the priority of economic development to the necessity for settling interstate disputes. The international community might assist Central American countries in linking these dimensions of the experience of each country in the subregion in order to consolidate democratic institutions, foster economic development, and strengthen the prospects for peace. Central American elites are sensitive to international concerns, making it more likely that a concerted international approach might work. Peacemaking can result from grand strategies only if thinking about boundary and territorial disputes is connected explicitly to enhancing the prospects for development.

International arbitration and mediation are not automatically good things. Relations between Argentina and Chile from the 1970s to the 1990s show how varied the outcomes may be. The 1977 British arbitration nearly brought the two countries to war; the papal arbitration in the early 1980s set the basis for the Beagle Channel settlement; and the Laguna del Desierto dispute was settled in the 1990s thanks to an International Court decision. The role of the International Court at The Hague in the dispute between Honduras and El Salvador illustrates other Janus-faced characteristics of such procedures. As Orozco has shown, both governments accepted the court's judgment, but that judgment raised the salience and the stakes of the bilateral dispute, injuring other aspects of bilateral relations for years while the definitive delimitation on the ground was still pending.<sup>73</sup>

International actors should avoid attempting to settle all boundary disputes until the parties invite them to do so. Many disputes remain inactive. They do not impede good bilateral relations in other areas; many boundary disputants remain parties to bilateral or multilateral free trade or common market agreements, as the Central American cases illustrate best. International attention in these cases may shine too much light on a dormant dispute, activate it, worsen bilateral relations, and fail to obtain a satisfactory solution. But international mediation at the request of the parties to a dispute can be effective. The peace settlement that followed the 1995 Ecuador-Peru war, as David Scott Palmer has shown, could not have been achieved without the active engagement of the governments of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and the United States; the modest but essential financial, military, and technical resources provided by these governments, especially the United States; and the skill and dedication of U.S. ambassador Luigi Einaudi.

When invited to mediate, international actors should be mindful of moral hazard problems. Countries that launch attacks should not be rewarded. The rewards for peace-



making, such as shared financing for economic development at the border, should be received jointly with the country that has been attacked. The gains that aggressors obtain as part of the negotiation of a settlement should be few, preferably symbolic, and available only if they agree to a full peace settlement. That was what occurred in 1998 in the settlement between Ecuador and Peru. Ecuador had started the war in 1995. It gained ownership of a small, mostly symbolic territory inside Peru as part of the definitive peace settlement but only as a private property of the Ecuadorian state, not as a sovereign right obtained through conquest.

The structure of inter-American relations has generated state behavior that deters war between neighbors and keeps the wars of the global system far from the Americas. The institutions, procedures, and ideologies evident in inter-American relations have kept wars infrequent and short. They built means of solidarity and greatly reduced the expectation of war between neighboring countries. The peacemaking machinery of the Americas can generate moral hazard, but it must not be dismantled or weakened. The persistence of militarized boundary disputes is the lesser evil. The peacemaking machinery serves the Americas well when it prevents war; were it to stop, wars might break out. The challenge is to curtail the moral hazard that results from such desirable international behavior.

## Notes

1. Paul K. Huth, *Standing Your Ground: Territorial Disputes and International Conflict* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 27–29. For an empirical study, see Paul R. Hensel, “One Thing Leads to Another: Recurrent Militarized Disputes in Latin America, 1816–1986,” *Journal of Peace Research* 31, no. 3 (1994): 281–297.
2. For a general discussion of the study of border and territorial differences, see Harvey Starr and Benjamin Most, “The Substance and Study of Borders in International Relations Research,” *International Studies Quarterly* 20, no. 44 (December 1976): 581–620.
3. The most remarkable changes have occurred in southern South America. See Andrew Hurrell, “An Emerging Security Community in South America?” in *Security Communities*, ed. Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 228–261.
4. John Vazquez and Marie T. Henehan, “Territorial Disputes and the Probability of War, 1816–1992,” *Journal of Peace Research* 38, no. 2 (2001): 123.
5. Paul R. Hensel, “Contentious Issues and World Politics: The Management of Territorial Claims in the Americas, 1816–1992,” *International Studies Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (March 2001): 100–101.
6. Huth, *Standing Your Ground*, 96, 133.
7. Paul K. Huth, “Enduring Rivalries and Territorial Disputes, 1950–1990,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 15, no. 1 (1996): 28.
8. Huth, *Standing Your Ground*, 183–184.
9. Beth A. Simmons, “Capacity, Commitment, and Compliance,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46, no. 6 (December 2002): 839–840, 843–844.
10. David Mares, “Boundary Disputes in the Western Hemisphere: Analyzing Their Relationship to Democratic Stability, Economic Integration, and Social Welfare,” *Pensamiento propio* 14 (July–December 2001): 31–59.
11. In their study of war and territorial disputes worldwide, Vazquez and Henehan have found that the presence of such disputes increases the probability of going to war more than other kinds of disputes. See their “Territorial Disputes and the Probability of War, 1816–1992,” 123, 136.
12. See text in “Belize and Guatemala Sign Agreement at OAS,” February 7, 2003, [www.oas.org/OASpage/press\\_releases/press\\_release.asp?Codigo=E-026/03](http://www.oas.org/OASpage/press_releases/press_release.asp?Codigo=E-026/03).
13. I count as disputes all circumstances in which at least one party believes that there is a dispute. In the Chile-Bolivia “dispute,” for example, the Chilean government does not “officially” believe that there is a dispute, but the Bolivian government does, and so I count it as a dispute.
14. For a history of Bolivia’s territorial problems, see Alipio Valencia Vega, *Geopolítica en Bolivia* (La Paz: Librería Editorial Juventud, 1965), chaps. 17–18. On the impact of geography on development, see Inter-American Development Bank, *Development beyond Economics: Economic and Social Progress in Latin America, 2000 Report* (Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank, 2000), chap. 3 in general and table 3.10 for geography’s adverse impact on Bolivia.

15. Andrés Serbin (with Manuel Berroterán), "Relations between Venezuela and Guyana and the Dispute over the Essequibo Territory: One Step Forward, Two Back?" *Pensamiento propio* 14 (July-December 2001): 135–158.
16. Wars are conventionally defined as one thousand battlefield-related deaths. In this work, the standard is five hundred such deaths. For a list of major international wars in Latin America, see Miguel Angel Centeno, *Blood and Debt: War and the Nation-State in Latin America* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 44.
17. For a thoughtful analytical history of South American international relations, which explores a much longer list of possible contributory explanations for what it calls the "South American zone of peace," see Arie M. Kacowicz, *Zones of Peace in the Third World: South America and West Africa in Comparative Perspective* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 67–124.
18. For the classic statement, see Robert N. Burr, "The Balance of Power in Nineteenth-Century South America: An Exploratory Essay," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 35 (1955): 37–60. See also João Resende-Santos, "Military Emulation in the International System" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1997).
19. Computed from Thomas L. Karnes, *The Failure of Union: Central America, 1824–1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), 5, 94.
20. For the origins and impact of the U.S. intervention in Nicaragua, see Dana G. Munro, *Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy in the Caribbean, 1900–1921* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1964).
21. Dexter Perkins, *A History of the Monroe Doctrine* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1961), especially chap. 2.
22. For a comprehensive study, see Herbert Goldhamer, *The Foreign Powers in Latin America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972).
23. Brazilian troops participated in both world wars, patrolling the seas off the northwest African coast in the first and on the Italian front in the second. The Mexican Air Force participated in World War II on the Pacific Ocean front, and the Colombian Army served in the Korean War.
24. Robert H. Jackson, *The Global Covenant: Human Conduct in a World of States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 316–335; and Fred Parkinson, "Latin America," in *States in a Changing World: A Contemporary Analysis*, ed. Robert H. Jackson and Alan James (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 239–243.
25. For an excellent analysis of the ideational foundations of peace in South America, see Centeno, *Blood and Debt*, in which he examines the "military mind" (77–84) and "public nationalism" (84–91). The quotation in text is from p. 91.
26. On Central America, see Karnes, *The Failure of Union*.
27. José Enrique Rodó, *Ariel, Liberalismo y Jacobinismo* (Montevideo: Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Previsión Social, 1964).
28. Manuel Orozco, "Boundary Disputes in Central America: Past Trends and Present Developments," *Pensamiento propio* 14 (July-December 2001): 99–134.

29. For evidence on the post-1945 period, see Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Peace in Parts: Integration and Conflict in Regional Organization* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), 135–154.

30. The decline in the likelihood of European intermediary activity was probably salutary. Beth Simmons finds that compliance with international arbitral decisions was much less likely with European arbitrators such as the United Kingdom, France, and Spain. See her “Capacity, Commitment, and Compliance,” 843.

31. For comparisons, see Nye, *Peace in Parts*, 170–172; Mark W. Zacher, *International Conflicts and Collective Security, 1946–1977: The United Nations, Organization of American States, Organization of African Unity, and Arab League* (New York: Praeger, 1979), 213–215. UN intervention in ongoing conflicts was ineffective; that is, it had neither a benign nor a malign effect. See Paul F. Diehl, Jennifer Reifschneider, and Paul R. Hensel, “United Nations Intervention and Recurring Conflict,” *International Organization* 50, no. 4 (autumn 1996): 683–700. Yet in the 1990s the United Nations was politically and militarily effective in contributing to a settlement of wars in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

32. Ronald Bruce St. John, “Ecuador-Peru Endgame,” *Boundary and Security Bulletin* 6, no. 4 (winter 1998–99): 79.

33. David R. Mares, *Violent Peace: Militarized Interstate Bargaining in Latin America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), chap. 3.

34. Orozco, “Boundary Disputes in Central America.”

35. Key sources are Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 97–109; Robert H. Jackson, “Sub-Saharan Africa,” in *States in a Changing World: A Contemporary Analysis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 136–156; and Jackson, *The Global Covenant*, 316–335.

36. Mark W. Zacher, “The Territorial Integrity Norm: International Boundaries and the Use of Force,” *International Organization* 55, no. 2 (spring 2001): 215–220.

37. This argument is consistent with Paul Hensel’s regarding the importance of salience in fostering peaceful or nonpeaceful means to settle Latin American territorial disputes. See his “Contentious Issues,” 100–101.

38. John D. Martz, “National Security and Politics: The Colombian-Venezuelan Border,” and Larry N. George, “Realism and Internationalism in the Gulf of Venezuela,” both in *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 30, no. 4 (winter 1988–89), 117–138 and 139–170, respectively.

39. Paul Huth has found that “a history of an unresolved territorial dispute with the target prior to World War II was strongly associated with a dispute between the two countries in the post-1950 period.” His findings match the Latin American cases active between 1950 and 1990. Huth, *Standing Your Ground*, 93.

40. For the dispute-enhancing effects of bad maps, see St. John, “Ecuador-Peru Endgame,” 79–85. For a summary of the dispute’s history, see Ronald Bruce St. John, “The Ecuador-Peru Dispute: A Reconsideration,” in *The Americas*, vol. 4 of *World Boundaries*, ed. Pascal O. Girot (London: International Boundaries Research Unit, 1994), 113–132.

41. Paul Hensel's research shows a statistically significant association between *successful* attempts to settle a territorial dispute in Latin America and a greater likelihood of militarized conflict. See his "Contentious Issues," 100–101.
42. For a case study, see Mares, *Violent Peace*, chap. 6.
43. Francisco Rojas Aravena, "Building a Strategic Alliance. The Case of Chile and Argentina," *Pensamiento propio* 14 (July–December 2001): 61–97.
44. Serbin, "Relations between Venezuela and Guyana and the Dispute over the Essequibo Territory."
45. For a case study, see Mares, *Violent Peace*, chap. 7.
46. These results are consistent with Huth's general findings that "when political leaders confront an adversary with whom there is a long-term history of past conflict, they are likely to have a strong base of domestic political support for continuing to pursue territorial claims by a combination of confrontational diplomatic and/or military policies." Huth, *Standing Your Ground*, 133.
47. For perspectives on the argument that democracies are unlikely to fight each other, see Michael Doyle, "Liberalism and World Politics," *American Political Science Review* 80, no. 4 (December 1986): 1151–1169; Jack S. Levy, "Democratic Politics and War," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18, no. 4 (spring 1988): 653–673; David A. Lake, "Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War," *American Political Science Review* 86, no. 1 (March 1992): 24–37; Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993); David E. Spiro, "The Insignificance of the Liberal Peace," *International Security* 19, no. 2 (fall 1994): 50–86; and Joanne Gowa, "Democratic States and International Disputes," *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (summer 1995): 511–522.
48. David Scott Palmer, "Overcoming the Weight of History: 'Getting to Yes' in the Peru-Ecuador Border Dispute," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 12, no. 2 (June 2001): 29–46.
49. Serbin, "Relations between Venezuela and Guyana and the Dispute over the Essequibo Territory."
50. Orozco, "Boundary Disputes in Central America."
51. Martin Pratt, "The Maritime Boundary Dispute between Honduras and Nicaragua in the Caribbean Sea," *Boundary and Security Bulletin* 9, no. 2 (summer 2001): 106–116.
52. Orozco, "Boundary Disputes in Central America."
53. *Ibid.*
54. Jorge I. Domínguez, "Security, Peace, and Democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean: Challenges for the Post–Cold War Era," in *International Security and Democracy: Latin America and the Caribbean in the Post–Cold War Era*, ed. Jorge I. Domínguez (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), 23. For historical discussion, see Alma H. Young and Dennis H. Young, "The Impact of the Anglo-Guatemalan Dispute on the Internal Politics of Belize," *Latin American Perspectives* 15, no. 2 (spring 1988): 6–30.
55. Paul Hensel, "Contentious Issues," 100, finds that the presence of democracy in both challenger and target Latin American countries is unrelated to the likelihood of militarized conflict. Beth Simmons reports that the presence of democracy in both disputant countries is unrelated to the likelihood that they would seek third-party arbitration. Nor are democratic

governments any more likely than nondemocratic governments to comply with arbitral outcomes. See her “Capacity, Commitment, and Compliance,” 839–840, 843–844.

56. Simmons argues that democratic governments can be “sophisticated negotiators: they will only negotiate in the range of agreements that they know can be accepted by their domestic constituency.” See her “Capacity, Commitment, and Compliance,” 840.

57. This argument is consistent with Robert Putnam’s “Diplomacy and Domestic Policy: The Logic of Two-Level Games,” *International Organization* 43, no. 3 (summer 1988): 427–460.

58. Rojas Aravena, “Building a Strategic Alliance.”

59. On civil-military unrest in Argentina and Venezuela, countries where boundary and territorial disputes have been problematic, see Deborah Norden, “The Rise of the Lieutenant Colonels: Rebellion in Argentina and Venezuela,” *Latin American Perspectives* 23, no. 3 (summer 1996): 74–86.

60. See Simmons’s finding that democratic governments negotiate only agreements that their domestic constituency will accept in her “Capacity, Commitment, and Compliance,” 840.

61. Rojas Aravena, “Building a Strategic Alliance.”

62. Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, “Democratic Transitions, Institutional Strength, and War,” *International Organization* 56, no. 2 (spring 2002): 297–337. Quotation is from p. 330.

63. Mares, “Boundary Disputes in the Western Hemisphere.”

64. Rojas Aravena, “Building a Strategic Alliance.”

65. This argument is consistent with Paul Huth’s argument that common security ties generally mitigate conflict over territorial disputes. See his “Enduring Rivalries and Territorial Disputes, 1950–1990,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 15, no. 1 (1996): 28. This behavior between Argentina and Chile can also be interpreted in light of the finding that challenger and target are more likely to make concessions when they share common security ties. See Paul Huth and Todd Allee, “Domestic Political Accountability and the Escalation and Settlement of International Disputes,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46, no. 6 (December 2002): 779.

66. Ronald Bruce St. John, “Chile, Peru, and the Treaty of 1929: The Final Settlement,” *Boundary and Security Bulletin* 8, no. 1 (spring 2000): 91–100.

67. Gary Goertz and Paul F. Diehl, *Territorial Changes and International Conflict* (London: Routledge, 1992), 50.

68. See also Mônica Hirst, “Security Policies, Democratization, and Regional Integration in the Southern Cone,” in *International Security and Democracy*, ed. Jorge I. Domínguez (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), 102–118.

69. Serbin, “Relations between Venezuela and Guyana and the Dispute over the Essequibo Territory.”

70. My arguments are generally consistent with Paul Huth’s “modified realist model” on most issues except the processes that foster the likelihood of the settlement of territorial disputes. His work does not explain well the outbreak of peace in most of South America. See Huth, *Standing Your Ground*, chaps. 3 and 7.

71. For an extended argument about the utility of domestic elite coalitional analysis to understand these changes, see Etel Solingen, *Regional Orders at Century's Dawn: Global and Domestic Influences on Grand Strategy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 119–164.

72. Sebastian Edwards, the World Bank's former chief economist for Latin America, argues that innovative ideas are the key resource of the international financial institutions. Personal communication.

73. Orozco, "Boundary Disputes in Central America." These findings regarding randomness are consistent with Hensel's for territorial disputes in Latin America between 1816 and 1992. He finds that the likelihood of resort to binding international arbitration is unrelated to the salience of the dispute and the presence of war or lower-level militarized behavior. See his "Contentious Issues," 100–101.

## About the Author

**Jorge I. Domínguez** is the Clarence Dillon Professor of International Relations and director of the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University. He is a founding member of the Inter-American Dialogue. Domínguez is the editor and coauthor of several Inter-American Dialogue books, including the first and second editions of *Constructing Democratic Governance in Latin America* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), as well as *International Security and Democracy: Latin America and the Caribbean in the Post-Cold War Era* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998) and *The Future of Inter-American Relations* (Routledge, 2000). He is also coauthor (with Rafael Fernández de Castro) of *The United States and Mexico: Between Partnership and Conflict* (Routledge, 2001). He is a former president of the Latin American Studies Association.



## About the Institute

The **United States Institute of Peace** is an independent, nonpartisan federal institution created by Congress to promote the prevention, management, and peaceful resolution of international conflicts. Established in 1984, the Institute meets its congressional mandate through an array of programs, including grants, fellowships, professional training, education programs from high school through graduate school, conferences and workshops, library services, and publications. The Institute's Board of Directors is appointed by the President of the United States and confirmed by the Senate.

*Chairman of the Board:* Chester A. Crocker

*Vice Chairman:* Seymour Martin Lipset

*President:* Richard H. Solomon

*Executive Vice President:* Harriet Hentges

*Vice President:* Charles E. Nelson

### Board of Directors

**Chester A. Crocker** (Chairman), James R. Schlesinger Professor of Strategic Studies, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University

**Seymour Martin Lipset** (Vice Chairman), Hazel Professor of Public Policy, George Mason University

**Betty F. Bumpers**, Founder and former President, Peace Links, Washington, D.C.

**Holly J. Burkhalter**, Advocacy Director, Physicians for Human Rights, Washington, D.C.

**Marc E. Leland**, Esq., President, Marc E. Leland & Associates, Arlington, Va.

**Mora L. McLean**, Esq., President, Africa-America Institute, New York, N.Y.

**María Otero**, President, ACCION International, Boston, Mass.

**Barbara W. Snelling**, Former State Senator and former Lieutenant Governor, Shelburne, Vt.

**Harriet Zimmerman**, Vice President, American Israel Public Affairs Committee, Washington, D.C.

### *Members ex officio*

**Lorne W. Craner**, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

**Douglas J. Feith**, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

**Paul G. Gaffney II**, Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy; President, National Defense University

**Richard H. Solomon**, President, United States Institute of Peace (nonvoting)

## OTHER TITLES IN THE PEACEWORKS SERIES

- The Road Ahead: Lessons in Nation Building from Japan, Germany, and Afghanistan for Postwar Iraq*, by Ray Salvatore Jennings (No. 49, May 2003)
- The Palestinian Reform Agenda*, by Nathan Brown (No. 48, December 2002)
- The Israeli Military and Israel's Palestinian Policy: From Oslo to the Al Aqsa Intifada*, by Yoram Peri (No. 47, November 2002)
- The Chaplain's Evolving Role in Peace and Humanitarian Relief Operations*, by Captain Paul McLaughlin (No. 46, September 2002)
- The Ethics of Armed Humanitarian Intervention*, by C. A. J. Coady (No. 45, July 2002)
- Democratic Values, Political Structures, and Alternative Politics in Greater China*, by David Zweig (No. 44, June 2002)
- Training for Peace and Humanitarian Relief Operations: Advancing Best Practices*, by Robert M. Schoenhaus (No. 43, April 2002)
- The Role of International Financial Institutions in International Humanitarian Law*, by Laurie R. Blank (No. 42, January 2002)
- Controlling Weapons of Mass Destruction: Findings from USIP-Sponsored Projects*, edited by Deepa M. Ollapally (No. 41, September 2001)
- Passing the Baton: Challenges of Statecraft for the New Administration*, with remarks by Samuel R. Berger and Condoleezza Rice (No. 40, May 2001)
- From Revolutionary Internationalism to Conservative Nationalism: The Chinese Military's Discourse on National Security and Identity in the Post-Mao Era*, by Nan Li (No. 39, May 2001)
- El Salvador: Implementation of the Peace Accords*, edited by Margarita S. Studemeister (No. 38, January 2001)
- The News Media and Peace Processes: The Middle East and Northern Ireland*, by Gadi Wolfsfeld (No. 37, January 2001)
- Conflict Management Training: Advancing Best Practices*, by Robert M. Schoenhaus (No. 36, January 2001)
- Coercive Prevention: Normative, Political, and Policy Dilemmas*, by Bruce W. Jentleson (No. 35, October 2000)
- Women in War and Peace: Grassroots Peacebuilding*, by Donna Ramsey Marshall (No. 34, August 2000)
- Grappling with Peace Education in Serbia*, by Ruzica Rozandic (No. 33, April 2000)
- Three Dimensions of Peacebuilding in Bosnia: Findings from USIP-Sponsored Research and Field Projects*, edited by Steven M. Riskin (No. 32, December 1999)

## OF RELATED INTEREST

Several other recent publications from the United States Institute of Peace address Latin American conflicts and efforts to resolve them peacefully. *Note:* Most of our reports can be downloaded or ordered from our web site at [www.usip.org/reports](http://www.usip.org/reports).

## RECENT INSTITUTE REPORTS INCLUDE:

*El Salvador: Implementation of the Peace Accords*, by Margarita S. Studemeister (Peaceworks no. 38, January 2001)

*Territorial Conflicts and Their Resolution: The Case of Ecuador and Peru*, by Beth A. Simmons (Peaceworks no. 27, April 1999)

To obtain an Institute report (available free of charge), please visit our web site ([www.usip.org/reports](http://www.usip.org/reports)). Or write United States Institute of Peace, 1200 17th Street NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20036-3011; call 202-429-3832; or fax 202-429-6063.

## RECENT BOOKS FROM USIP PRESS INCLUDE:

"The Ecuador-Peru Peace Process," by Luigi R. Einaudi, in *Herding Cats: Multiparty Mediation in a Complex World*, edited by Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall (1999)

*Revolutionary Movements in Latin America: El Salvador's FMLN and Peru's Shining Path*, by Cynthia McClintock (1998)

"First Do No Harm: U.S. Foreign Policy and Respect for Human Rights—El Salvador and Guatemala, 1980–96," by Susan Burgerman, in *Implementing U.S. Human Rights Policy: Agendas, Policies, and Practices*, edited by Debra Liang-Fenton (forthcoming 2003)

To order books, call 800-868-8064 (U.S. only) or 703-661-1590, or fax 703-661-1501. Complete book descriptions are available at [www.usip.org/books](http://www.usip.org/books).



United States  
Institute of Peace

1200 17th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
[www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org)

Peaceworks 50

Peaceworks No. 50. First published September 2003.

The views expressed in this report are those of the author alone.  
They do not necessarily reflect views of the United States Institute of Peace.

UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE  
1200 17th Street NW, Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20036-3011

Phone: 202-457-1700  
Fax: 202-429-6063  
E-mail: [usip\\_requests@usip.org](mailto:usip_requests@usip.org)  
Web: [www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org)