Yet Schmitz's conclusion calls attention to one important consequence of the consistent U.S. attempt to use "moral arguments and appeals to gain public support" (308) for its foreign initiatives. By opening the discourse of U.S. foreign policy to moral argumentation, this policy remains subject and vulnerable, itself, to moral judgment.

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Stephen G. Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World: John F. Kennedy Confronts Communist Revolution in Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

Without the Soviet Union as an alternative model, Latin American nations increasingly imitate the United States. But "Tio Sam" frequently sends mixed messages regarding public policy toward Central and South America. During the Cold War, U.S. decisions proved particularly difficult to decipher. President John F. Kennedy's interrupted administration especially defied easy analysis. In the book, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World*, Stephen G. Rabe argues that President Kennedy's Latin American relations generated conservative, even reactionary, forces. In dealing with these nations, Kennedy may have allowed anticommunist fervour to override promotion of democracy, constitutionalism, capitalism, and social justice.

Although U.S. resistance to communism initially prompted Kennedy to advocate reform in Latin America, fear of instability inspired ultimate acceptance of military or dictatorial rule. The young president asserted leadership in a global struggle against communist regimes. When several Latin American dictators lost power in the late 1950s, Kennedy encouraged democratic capitalism for these new governments. The young president promoted a balance of free-market principles with progressive taxation and moderate government regulation. Kennedy believed that this "New Deal"-style approach would bring social justice, legitimate and stable regimes, and resistance to communist appeals and insurrections. Excessive apprehension about short-term instability, however, ultimately motivated Kennedy's Latin America policy. According to Rabe, Kennedy favoured pro-United States dictatorial and military governments rather than leftist democratic regimes. Socialist leaders who refused to denounce communism never inspired the confidence of U.S. officials. If the United States could not guarantee a Latin American leader's anticommunist credentials, therefore, Kennedy favoured order rather than democracy, constitutionalism, and decolonization.

In Rabe's interpretation, Kennedy's support for military rulers and counterinsurgency doctrines left a reactionary legacy. To avoid disorder and communist revolution, Kennedy tolerated authoritarian regimes in the Dominican

Republic, Haiti, and Peru. In Argentina, Brazil, and Guatemala, the United States funded opposition movements against democratically elected governments that resisted Kennedy's isolation of communist Cuba. Kennedy opposed democracy and British decolonization in Guiana due to fear that communists would dominate an independent republic in this area. Only leaders in Venezuela and Chile attracted Kennedy's full support because these rulers more consistently cooperated with U.S. opposition to Fidel Castro's Cuba. The United States military even trained Latin American armed forces to suppress domestic rebellions. While U.S. officials claimed that such contact would transfer democratic ideas to Latin America's armies, Rabe challenges this opinion.

Rabe's book would well serve upper-level undergraduate and graduate courses in U.S. diplomatic relations, but requires balance from Latin American and non-government perspectives. Rabe holds Kennedy's administration responsible for Latin America's most unfortunate consequences. According to Rabe, Kennedy substantially contributed to a legacy of authoritarianism in recent Latin American governments. Local and national sources nonetheless have begun to reveal many restraints on the United States. Central and South American leaders frequently rejected U.S. attempts to negotiate. While we should require accountability from U.S. diplomats, each nation's own national citizens and officials bear the ultimate burden for providing good government. Forthcoming studies of private actors, and the interaction between state and society, would also broaden understanding of U.S.-Latin American relations. In this period, for example, Kennedy's friend and Boston Archbishop Richard Cardinal Cushing sponsored U.S. Catholic missionaries to Peru and Bolivia. A forthcoming study reveals that these Vatican representatives often promoted *Tio Sam*-style democracy more than religious tenets. Scholars need to explain how presidential policy either countered or complemented such messages. Such contributions would further discussion of the U.S. role and responsibility in the Western Hemisphere.

The United States and Latin America share several traditions that encourage cooperation. In both regions, European customs and a Catholic faith remain rooted in the culture. Modern technological, cultural, and economic changes also promote connections in the Western Hemisphere. Post-Cold War North America has integrated into a common market that may expand to Central and Southern nations. Immigrants from Latin American nations increasingly contribute to U.S. politics and culture. Rabe's book offers insight into a critical period in U.S.-Latin American relations. While Rabe concludes that the United States wrongly imposed a Cold War lens when fashioning Latin American policy, scholars require further study of diverse sources to determine whether U.S. actions ultimately aided or antagonized Latin American nations.

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